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THE BLUEGRASS COUNTRY

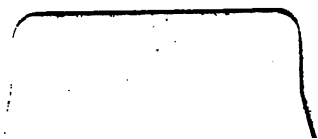


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THE BELLE OF THE BLUEGRASS COUNTRY.

STUDIES IN BLACK
AND WHITE
By H. D. FITTMAN



BOSTON THE C. M. CLARK
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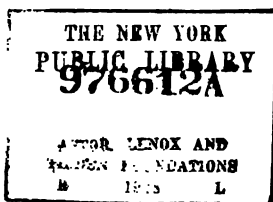


THE BELLE OF THE BLUEGRASS COUNTRY.

STUDIES IN BLACK
AND WHITE
By H. D. PITTMAN



BOSTON THE C. M. CLARK
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Boston, Mass.,

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Published in June 1906.

To the

Hon. John S. Wise

This book is respectfully dedicated,
the following quotation from his
recent stories of "The Extinct Race"
having suggested to the author this
volume: _____

"Those who remember anything definite
about slavery as it was before the beginning of
the actual conflict over it are not much younger
than myself (fifty-nine), and we who are on
the 'firing-line of memory' ought to chronicle
our impressions before we go."

John S. Wise.

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FOREWORD

THESE studies in Black and White, drawn from life, in and about Harrodstown just one hundred years after "The Crossing," were designed to preserve types of a people fast passing away, with their changed institutions. They are pictures of that period following soon after the Civil War, before the blight of their altered conditions had fallen so deep as to rob them of their picturesque characteristics, and disturb materially the harmony of the races.

Harrodstown, the most ancient settlement in Kentucky, became the cradle of the great West, for it was Kentucky which stood like a bulwark in the dark pioneer days between the Indians and their British allies and the struggling little republic east of the Appalachian Chain, too much exhausted by her struggle for independence to resist their encroachments.

It was in the stockade of Harrodstown that

the hardy frontiersmen were nurtured in those stirring times, and from this rude fort that great patriot, George Rogers Clark, drew mainly his little company of one hundred and seventy men which conquered the western territory, adding three States to the Republic, without the loss of a man.

The early settlers of Kentucky were drawn almost exclusively from the Virginia, North Carolina and Maryland Colonies. More than half of these people were of Scotch-Irish, North English or Welsh extraction. Practically the population was British. It is not strange, therefore, that the beautiful blue-grass farms, with their fine homes, cattle and horses, were likened to the old English homes, and the stalwart men to English country gentlemen, for the law of heredity holds as good with man as with the animal and the vegetable creations.

The road over the mountains and through the wilderness was difficult. For several decades the dangers and hardships were so great that only the boldest, the strongest, most able-bodied men and stout-hearted women were willing to face them—the pick and choice of the best blood of the colonies.

FOREWORD

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From these hardy pioneers and heroes there sprung a race of women and men, peculiar in many respects to this borderland which gave them birth, and closely associated with them from the beginning were the faithful slaves, who give color to this story.

The Belle of the Bluegrass Country

I

A KENTUCKY BELLE

"A daughter of the gods,
Divinely tall and most divinely fair."

It was one afternoon in April, 'way back in the seventies, not more than a decade after the close of the Civil War, that I first saw her, this radiant creature, who was to color the whole of my future life,—for "A love and aspiration which once really exists, lives forever, before God, and it is better so than if one has never felt them."

For two days I had been journeying toward the setting sun, and on the third, while his younger brother, riding over the eastern hills, was traveling toward the zenith, I entered "God's Country," as the natives call that portion of Kentucky which lies within a radius of thirty miles of Lexington, the Mecca, then, as now, of the horsemen and cattlemen from all over the United States.

2 THE BELLE OF THE

"God's country truly," I said to myself, as passing through this belt I allowed my eyes to rove at will over the

"Sweet fields all dressed in living green,
Where everlasting spring abides."

Stretching out before me on all sides were great unbroken plains, laughing in the morning sun as the tender blades of grain were stirred by each passing breeze. Here and there some monarch of the primeval forest, spared by the woodman's ax in generations past and gone, standing aloof from its fellows, stretching out its giant arms in every direction, formed with its tender leaves a shifting circle of shade, within which browsed a herd of sleek calves, fit to be entered for the prize show at the county fair.

Pursuing our journey through woodlands carpeted with the famous blue grass, which never dies, green as the sods of the Emerald Isle, I could glimpse in the distance stately manor houses set in their gardens, with long sloping lawns leading down the well-kept drive, that gleamed like silver in the green setting. Spring, though late in coming this year, had been generous. The cherries and the pears

and apples were all abloom—great bunches of white blossoms, so thick that not even a spear of green leaf, or brown stem, marred the bridal whiteness of their robes. Like bridesmaids, the peaches were decked in feathery pink, making a delicate patch of color in the landscape.

Hedges of wild crab apple, crowned with pink and white blooms, mingled their odors with that of the delicate white flowers of the hawthorn bushes, burdening the air with their perfume. In the gardens I could see great beds of yellow jonquils and gay striped tulips vieing with each other in color, while borders of sweet hyacinths, smelling of spring, were inviting the tireless buzzing bees to a rich harvest—pictures of unending charm without a peer.

Long before noon I had reached my destination, Lexington, the charming little inland city, planted nearly a century ago, right in the heart of this bluegrass region. Not long after I found myself and my belongings deposited at the Phoenix, the only hostelry of note at that time, where I expected to meet and talk over with my chief the details of a stupendous bit of work for that part of the State. After a most satisfying dinner for a hungry man,

4 THE BELLE OF THE

served at the unconventional noon hour, I retired to look over my mail, and write such letters as demanded my attention, a task which consumed the greater part of the afternoon.

Returning to the hotel after my visit to the postoffice, I took possession of one of the empty chairs ranged alongside of the building as was the custom of those days, and fell into a train of serious thought.


I am a civil engineer by profession, and belonged then to a corps to be sent out from the East to supervise the building of a bridge over the Kentucky River, for a certain railroad designed to traverse the State, connecting with its iron bands the North and the South. An almost impossible task it seemed, for it had once before been undertaken, and abandoned, before the war. A new plan, however, was now under consideration. Whether this new effort would prove successful or not, I realized that it might not prove an altogether pleasing task.

The war just closed between the two sections had brought in its train such disastrous consequences upon this borderland, raided and harried by both armies, that the dwellers therein were not disposed to look with favor upon any

project for drawing the opposing factions together, thus cementing, as it were, the reunion of the States which their fathers and brothers and sons had bled and died to sever. In fact, they pointed with pride to the natural barrier which God Himself had set as a bar to the enterprise, and were rather disposed to deride any efforts on the part of man to bridge the chasm which yawned between. Such being the case, we "bridge builders," as representatives of the Northern conquerors and invaders, could scarcely look forward to much in the way of social amenities from the fair women and brave men who had given to the grand old State its reputation for the beauty of the one and the chivalry of the other.

This, however, did not disturb me greatly, for, being wedded to my profession, I was interested in the successful accomplishment of a work so difficult; and yet—man is a gregarious animal—I could not look forward with any degree of satisfaction to a possible ostracism by those of my own station in life.

From these serious considerations I was aroused by the sudden halt before the entrance, of a splendid pair of thoroughbreds, drawing an open, high-poised buggy of much style and



superior finish. Seated in it was a man of fine military appearance. Beside him was a young girl, certainly the most beautiful woman I had ever seen, and living in the nation's capital, I had seen many. They seemed to have a number of parcels to dispose of, and took some time distributing them among a half dozen idle negro boys, who seemed to spring up out of the ground, "ter hole the hawses," to carry the packages and make themselves generally useful, for which they were rewarded by a handful of silver scattered indiscriminately among them. I had thus ample time to observe the newcomers without attracting their attention, and found myself trying to decide in my own mind in what lay the girl's superlative charm—that indefinable something which I could no more analyze than I could the exquisite fragrance borne to me from the flowers which she carried on her arm.

The father, for it was easy to determine the relationship between them, stepped down from the buggy, and giving his hand to the young girl, she sprang out as lightly as a bird on the wing. As she stood beside him, tall and willowy, she more than reached his shoulder.

Stopping near me a few moments to greet

a friend, I had an opportunity to note more closely the rare shell-tinted complexion and luminous dark eyes, half veiled by the almond-shaped lids, with their long dark lashes, as she lifted them a moment to smile lovingly upon her father; a pretty trick acquired, perhaps, because of her superior height, which obliged her to look down upon her fellows.

Her golden hair lay in soft rings about her brow, and was gathered in luxurious ringlets at the back—a “cascade of curls,” I believe they were called in those days.

Dividing her flowers with her friend, a few stray branches fell upon the pavement almost at my feet, and I hastened to pick them up to restore them to her. For a moment her downcast eyes looked into mine (they were prettier at close range than I had thought them at first), and a sudden wave of color swept into her cheek. I don't know why, unless by some maidenly instinct, she divined my admiration.

She thanked me in softly modulated tones, for she had that rare quality, a low, sweet voice, even toned as a harp. In a moment she was gone, and the sun seemed to have hidden behind a cloud, or the twilight to have fallen, bringing with it the chill of evening. There

was only a pink bud lying at my feet—overlooked when I handed her the flowers—to remind me of her passing. Surreptitiously I picked it up.

“Oh, love, and youth, and rosy lips,
Pink buds in pinker finger tips,”

was the refrain that came into my mind, and I kept repeating it to myself, until interrupted by the return of the little bundle carriers.

“I’s powerful glad to see der Kernel, I is,” remarked one of them, flipping a silver piece in his outspread palm.

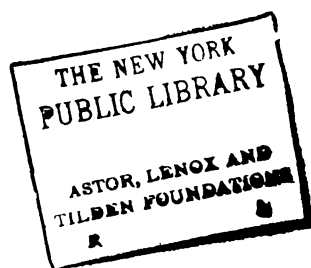
“Shuh, dat’s nuffin’,” sententiously replied his fellow. “Dey b’long to de berry fust famblys, fore de wah, and had a sight ob niggahs.”

“So did my ole massa,” said the other, not to be outdone.

“But my mammy uster b’long to ’em, and she say gole is plentier out dah dan silber. She say der kernel nebber tort no mo’ uv given her a gole dollar when she cook a rale good dinner, as she know’d how ter cook, den mos’ gen-men tinks uv a quarter. Why, chile, dey eats off’n silber plates an’ drinks out uv silber cups, she say. And dey jes keep dis little silber



Bellevue



change to throw to you niggahs when dey come ter town."

"I bet your mammy would like powerful well dese days to eat one o' dem good dinners what she brags about," with fine sarcasm.

"Ef she wouldn't, I would," answered the little champion of the family, turning a hand-spring as he disappeared around the corner, oblivious of the innuendo.

At supper the strangers were placed opposite me at table, and in that off-hand fashion that marks these high-bred people, I was made to feel at my ease. The Colonel chatted pleasantly with me about various matters of common interest, and covert glances from the half-veiled eyes, and occasionally a little smile at some of her father's sallies, betrayed an interested listener in the daughter.

After supper I was joined on the pavement, and in a smoke by mine host of the Phoenix, from whom I learned without difficulty that Colonel Claiborne, owner of "Bellevue," a fine stock farm, "over the river," with his beautiful daughter, the belle *par excellence* of all that bluegrass country, was at that moment domiciled in his hotel. She would be visiting friends in the city for a few days, until the last

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claimed. "I am here on a bridge building expedition."

"Over the Kentucky?" interrupted Jack.
"I'm sorry for that."

"You see," he continued, "these farmers don't take well to that idea, particularly those living along the line of the railroad. Most of them have held their lands ever since Indian times. They were located by their fathers, nearly a hundred years ago, and many of them paid for with Government scrip—the only pay they ever got for fighting for their country. Now they don't like the idea, even a little bit, of a lot of 'Northern capitalists' cutting up their farms into bits, tearing through their fields and killing their fine cattle and horses. They can't see any 'right-of-way' they've got. They just don't want it, and they are kicking like steers against it."

"But can't they see the advantage it will be to them—the opening up of a market for their produce?"

"What good will that do them? The Major used to say, 'The niggers raise the corn, the hogs eat it, and the niggers eat the hogs. If I manage to get a living along with the niggers and the hogs I'll be doing pretty well.'"

"Quite a philosopher, this Major, but don't you see the conditions are changed now. The negro being eliminated, the Major will have something to sell."

"Not much as long as the nigger still raises the corn, the hog eats it and the nigger eats the hog. The Major will have to get to work himself before that time comes. The farmers can't get used to it; the darkies can't get used to it. It will be a long time before both parties can adjust themselves to the new conditions, and do without each other. They ain't ready for the railroad yet."


"I'm sorry, for I am here to help build it, if it can be done. I'm under orders."

"All right. You can try it."

"What are you doing, Jack?"

"I'm farming, but I won't hold this against you. I'll give you a good time—the time of your life. Say, Old Man, how about you—is your head so chuck full of mathematics, and angles, and triangles, that you wouldn't know a pretty girl from a right-angled triangle if you were to see one?"

"You can try me," I answered, thinking of one pretty girl that I could never mistake for a triangle.



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"I hope you were not in the army?" questioned Jack, after a moment's hesitation.

I made haste to relieve his embarrassment, by answering his question fully. "I took no part whatever in the war. In the first place, I am opposed to war on principle. It is barbarous at all times. This time it was more than barbarous. In the second place, I had many friends in the Confederate army, and I did not care to train my gun on you boys—my companions and friends—and you know, perhaps, that my mother was a Virginian. She had two brothers in the Confederate army; so that, while her interests were bound up in the North with my father's, her heart was with her people in the South. Now you understand my position."

"I am glad you didn't take up arms against us. It is bad enough to be a Yankee—and a bridge builder. I can make that all right I think by telling them that I don't think you are a very good one—either Yankee or bridge builder—but you know I never could have stood for a bluecoat. Come, let us take a walk."

In a little while, lighting our cigars, we were strolling with a pleasant kind of vagueness

BLUEGRASS COUNTRY. 17

about the quaint old town, with its generous lawns, shaded by trees of venerable growth, and its picturesque houses of colonial type. I saw Ashland, where Henry Clay had lived when, as a Senator (young for the honor), he had with impassioned eloquence urged upon Congress the declaration of the War of 1812. I saw the homes of the Prestons, the Shelbys and Harts, the Gibsons, the Breckinridges, the Hunts, the Todds—historic names, all of them, closely interwoven with the history of the State and the nation. Of course Jack pointed out with loving pride the home of his rebel chieftain, John Morgan.

During the walk we exchanged many confidences, but somehow I could not bring myself to mention the little episode of the evening before, which had so impressed me. I tried, but found at each effort my pulse quickening and the blood mounting to my face. Jack I found had many beauties in his bouquet of roses. Among them one, a cousin, to whom he promised to introduce me some day.

"But you must remember, old man, there is to be no poaching on my preserves."

"You can rely on me," I promised, and I faithfully meant to keep it.

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Slowly we wended our way back to the hotel, through streets almost deserted by this time, for the quiet little city seemed to be still covered by the pall of sorrow which had fallen upon it, as upon all Southern cities during those perilous years of the war.

Jack did not return to supper, and I missed him. Resisting the fascination of the "little game" in which I was again most cordially invited to take part, I sat alone for a short time on the pavement, then tempted by the beauty of the night, I started out for a walk through the residence portion of the little city, thinking perhaps I might—I would not complete the sentence even to myself.

Nevertheless, with more than passing interest I strolled on through the silent streets, on either side of which, sleeping in the shadowy stillness of their expansive lawns, were set the venerable old homes, whose foundations were laid more than half a century before. They were shaded by trees of pristine growth, some of them gnarled and bent and twisted by the fierce storms which had passed over them in their youth, but spared by the ax because of their years. At their feet grew luxurious beds of violets, and over the twisted roots that pro-

truded from the bare earth, the perennial ivy was riotously wreathing itself, hiding all the deformities of age.

By the light of the full moon, casting its network of silver through the sparsely leaved trees I could see the flower beds, dim patches of color in the mellow light, but sweetening the air with their delicious odors, distilled by the dews which lay heavily upon them.

At one of the most imposing of these houses I halted, for through a walk shaded by two rows of stately Lombardy poplars I could see in the full moonlight a wide porch upon which quite a little party of young people were grouped, discussing merrily the events of the day. From the open window came the sound of music.

I paused only a moment in my walk, but long enough for my undoing, for suddenly close beside me, from a tangle of shrubbery near the gate, through which there was a labyrinthine maze, or "lover's walk," to the house, there came a voice, feminine, youthful and melodious; a voice which once heard could not soon be forgotten; refined, polished and delicately modulated, with a delicious little Southern accent, which in no wise diminished its

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melody nor the graciousness of her speech. Just then she emerged into the light. Exalted in height, erect in her bearing, graceful in movement, her gay-colored gown defining with its soft folds every curve of her lithesome body. Pausing in the silvery penumbra of the old trees through which the moonbeams were generously sifting, accentuating her great fairness, Miss Claiborne—for it was she—was indeed good to look upon.

As she advanced slowly with her companion through the misty shadows of moonlight, and haze, and tender green leaves, she was attended by the elusive fragrance of hundreds of sweet violets, crushed beneath her footsteps. By some intuition she divined, perhaps, my presence, and glanced up startled, I fancied, at seeing someone so near. I could, by stretching my arm over the gateway, have almost laid my hand upon her. Instead, it went instinctively up to my hat, which I lifted in acknowledgment of her presence.


Her eyes met mine, and with the kindly courteous air of these gentle people, she inclined her head, pausing for an instant only, while the moon shone full upon her. In its light her face was very fair and pure, and

delicate in its contour; the air of an aristocrat stamped upon every feature, and her eyes shone darkly bright beneath her perfectly arched brows.

All of these things I marked in the space of a second, for we each resumed our walk, conscious perhaps that there was nothing in our chance meeting at the table the evening before to justify the lifting of my hat on my part, or the inclination of her head in acknowledgment. Though innocent of intent to spy upon her, I felt like an eavesdropper caught in the act.

Slowly I walked back to the hotel, my mind in a tumult. I was perturbed, perplexed, humiliated by this craving to see her which had sprung up like a mushroom in the night, betraying me into such folly; by this eager desire for a sight of her, speech with her, acquaintance with this beautiful stranger, whose whole pathway no doubt was marked with bleeding hearts, which she crushed as relentlessly beneath her feet as the violets—so many trophies of her conquests.

I could not understand myself. For twenty years, or at least since I had been a law unto myself, no woman with whom I had ever be-



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fore come in contact had the power to move me—and now? Here was a confession of weakness; my self-esteem was wounded. I was no longer sufficient unto myself. I began to feel that up to this time my life had been colorless—that there was a savor lacking, without which it would scarcely be worth the living. I tried to dismiss her from my mind, to think of other things. But the harder I tried to quit thinking of her the more I thought of her, and I dreamed of her that night.

On the following morning Jack made his appearance at the breakfast table, late as usual.

“By Jove! old man, she is in town. Think of that!”

“Who is in town?”

“The belle of the whole bluegrass country.”

“Indeed! How many of them are there? This is the fourth that I have heard of in the little while that I have been here.”

“Pshaw! There are belles and belles. Different people have different ideas. I’ve got mine, and it’s right. This is the girl I told you about, don’t you know? The very f-i-n-e-s-t of the bunch,” the adjective long drawn out, as befitted the case.

“When did she arrive?”

"I don't know. By the merest chance I saw her after I left you. Her little pink silk sunshade shielded her face, but I recognized her hand; such a tiny little hand, just like a rose leaf—and feet to match—but nobody could fool me about that hand."

"Hold it too often?"

He ignored this question, but continued: "They went whirling by without seeing me, and being on foot I could not follow."

"So you gave up the chase?"

"I give up the chase!" with fine scorn. "Not on your life! I called last night at all of the places I was likely to find her, without success. But she's sure to be somewhere, and I'll meet her. Lexington is not big enough for a girl like that to hide in."

I smiled, a little incredulous perhaps, for I was thinking of the rare beauty I had discovered myself, beside whom Jack's would pale—a sweet little wild rose beside the exquisite hothouse queen of flowers. Still I could not bring myself to speak of this rare flower to Jack.

Neither of us said anything for a time, just ate on in silence, thinking deeply. Then Jack broke the silence suddenly.

"Do you know, old man, you've turned out to be a devilishly fine looking fellow? You might pass for a Kentuckian, 'to the manor born,' you know."

"Thank you. I am overwhelmed. This latter clause leaves nothing good unsaid."

"That's right; nothing could be any finer. That's what Miss Preston says about you. Do you know those girls were peeping through the blinds when we passed yesterday? She says that with your height and broad shoulders and erect carriage you might easily be taken for one of us."

"Well, since my mother was a Virginian, I can pass as a first cousin, I suppose?"

"That's right. Awful glad to see you again. Good-bye, old man. I'll see you later. I'm off on the hunt again."

"Say, Jack! Jack!" I called after him. "Suppose you call me by my name once in a while. I'm only thirty-five; not such a gray-beard as these people will suppose if they hear you."


"That's so, I never thought of that, Anthony. Remind me of it again." And off he went, both hands rammed down in his pockets, whistling "The Girl I Left Behind Me."

III

“UNCLE DAVE”—FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH

TIME now bade fair to hang heavy on my hands. I grew restless, and to relieve the tedium of the leaden-footed hours, I made daily excursions into the surrounding country, often walking miles. Accustomed as I was to much exercise, I found it a most agreeable way of passing the time, for none of these trips were without incident.

It was near nightfall of that same day, when, after a tramp over hill and vale, through forests, by babbling brooks, and around rich meadow lands, that I came suddenly through an opening in a hedge in full view of an old homestead. Directing my steps thither, I soon came to a gate, already ajar. Pushing it open I sauntered through the long shaded avenue and up to the very doors of the old Colonial house, sure of a welcome if the master were there. That he was not, was evidenced by many tokens. The shutters were folded and hanging loosely upon their hinges, and the



tall fluted columns which supported the roof of the long gallery were fast rotting away; from their tops fluttered a whole colony of bats, scared by my intrusion.

The serpentine walks were almost obliterated by the grass which had pushed up through the gravel, and the twilight air was laden with the perfume of sweet flowers, honey locusts and wild roses, which had fallen from their trellis and were trailing upon the ground.

To the right of the house was a large, old-fashioned garden, separated from the lawn by a low fence overrun by morning-glories and wild grapevines. Through the open gate I could see flowers abloom, and wandered in to find the once neat pathway overrun by weeds, which were also running riot among the old-fashioned flowers.

I sat down to rest in an old grape arbor fast decaying beneath its burden of leaves and unpruned branches, and was giving rein to my fancy, picturing to myself the stately women and men who had walked in this garden, and had rested no doubt beneath this very arbor, when a low song, quavering and uncertain, broke the deathlike silence. Glad to hear the sound of a human voice, I arose, and,

guided by it, came shortly to an open, well-kept grass-plot in the wilderness of weeds and flowers.

"She's a climbin' uv de golden sta'rs," were the words that I could distinguish as I drew nearer, and came suddenly upon two graves, almost hidden from view by evergreens and shaded by silver-leaf poplars and quivering aspens, whose leaves rustled pleasantly with every passing breeze. I stopped in my walk and uncovered my head. Here were a mother's darlings, too precious, no doubt, to be buried out of her sight in the village cemetery. One often comes across graves in the country gardens.

I drew nearer. One was a bed outlined with marble and filled with lilies of the valley. Great bunches of Ascension lilies stood like sentinels at the head. The other was overrun with ivy, and a laurel bush was growing beside the lilies. Two slender white stones stood side by side upon a single slab, upon which was written: "They were lovely in their lives, and in their death they were not divided." Upon the stone, almost hidden by lilies, was inscribed: "Lillian, aged 20"; and underneath: "The Father walked in his garden to

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gather lilies, and he plucked the fairest of them all."

On the other stone was marked: "Harold, a hero of Chickamauga." From the dates I could see that for several years they had slumbered there. An old negro, bent by age, now came forward with his rake, for he was gathering up the grass which had been newly mown.

"Sarvent, Massa," he said, pulling off his old wool hat in token of recognition.

"Good-evening, Uncle," I answered; "I fear I have intruded."

"No, Massa; heaps o' people cum heyar t' look at de ole place. Hit wuz a fine place in hits day, sur, but"—shaking his head in a melancholy way—"dem days is dun gone, as you kin see fur yerse'f. Me an' dese heyar chillen"—pointing to the graves—"is 'bout all dat's lef'."

"The owners, too, are dead, I suppose?"

"No, bless Gawd, dey ain't dead, so fur as I knows. De las' I heerd dey wuz a travelin' in furren parts. Dey can't abide to stay here, an' de fiel's ober dah is all tenent' out; an' jes' me an' my ole 'ooman libs in de cabin close by, jes' to take keer uv dese heyar graves. Dey mus'n' on no account go ter weeds. Dis is my

wu'k, togedder wid raisin' a little truck patch fur me'n Marthy. An' she raises de shotes an' de pullets fur meat."

"Then, Uncle——"

"David, sur. Mos' ever'body calls me 'Uncle David,' or 'Daddy.' Heaps uv 'em calls me 'Daddy;' de niggahs does, do' 'cou'se I ain't all dare 'daddies,' an' de white folks dey calls me 'Uncle David.' Skuze me, Massa, an' I'll go on wid my wu'k, fur de sun's gitten powerful low. In all dese heyer years I ain't missed a day yit lookin' arter dis wu'k, do' my rheumatiz is powerful bad sumtimes. It ain't none too good ter-day, what makes me tink it's gwineter rain, an' I jes' cut dis grass."

With a wry face he stooped down to gather it into the basket which he carried.

"This is the grave of a young girl, I see."

"Hit am de bed whah my young Mistiss sleeps de sleep what knows no wakin' 'till de las' trump soun'; an' when hit do, I kalkerlates she'll be 'bout de fus' to brak de bon's uv death. But dey'll rize togedder, see ef dey don't."

"This was her lover?"

"He lubbed de berry groun' she walked on, but no better'n she lubbed him. Now you res'yerself, Massa," pointing to a seat near by.

Glad of the invitation, I sat down, and while the faithful old servant knelt by the lily bed, weeding it carefully, I drew from him his story of the old days past and gone.

"You see, Massa, in dem days I wuz a spry young niggah. I cum from my Mistiss' folks, and natchelly I waited on her. I made dis heyer guardin', an' I drove her kerridge, an' I put on my white jackit, an' my white ap'on, an' my white gloves an' waited on her table when quality folks wuz here. You could always tell ef dey wuz quality folks by dat. She had udder young niggahs to wait on de table ebry day, but nobody but 'David' could sarve de quality."

"You had been trained from your childhood, no doubt," I ventured to suggest.

"Train'd? I reckon I wuz—wid a hick'ry stick by my mammy, what had nussed de young Mistiss, an' had cum home wid her de day she wuz married, her head tied up wid a white handkercher; an' she fotched me along in de waggin along wid de weddin' clo's to wait on de young Mistiss, an' she train me wid dat stick mighty nigh ebry day.

"Well, we cum to dis heyer berry house, which wuzn't so big den; de Marster he built

dem wings—he call 'em, I dunno fur why—
an' de fron' po'ch wid dem big pillahs, arter-
wards. Wun mawnin' he cum outer de house
steppin' high an' proud-like, an' sez he to me,
sez he: 'David, we've got a mighty purty little
gal in de house,' sez he.

“ ‘My Gawd, Massa,’ sez I, ‘I tho't fur sho'
hit would a ben a boy, an' hit oughter by rights
bin a young Massa.’

“ ‘No, hit ought'n,’ said he: ‘We wanted
a gal de berry wus' kin’.’

“ ‘Now I kno'd dat wus not so, p'intedly, fur
dey allus wants a boy fust, ter cum inter de
land an' niggahs; but arter I seed de little
Missie I didn' blame him fur tellin' de lie.
None o' us would a swapped her fur a dozen
boys.

“ ‘You jes' wait tell you see her; yo' mam-
my's gittin' ready to fotch her out here to show
you,’ sez he. He wen' back into de house, an'
I tuk down de big tin horn and blowed it so
loud dat ebery nigger in de quarter, an' dem
what had gone to de fiel's, cum a runnin', and
purty soon de yard wuz full uv 'em, like a
swa'm o' bees. Dah wus nigh onto a hundred
niggahs den, an' when I tole 'em dey had a
young Mistiss, you oughter a seen 'em. Ef I

would a let 'em dey would er raised de roof off of de house wid deir noise.

"Den comes my mammy outen de house wid de little Missie in her arms, jis' like a little ball o' white cotton, all baled up wid blue ribbins an' things. I wish you could a seen mammy's head han'kercher. She wur dat proud dat she tied it up so high dat she had ter stoop down to go under de do'. Well, ebery one o' dem niggahs, pickaninnies an' all, had to look at dat baby, an' hit a smilin' like de angels wuz already a talkin' to it. Den Massa he goes in de house, an' he makes a great big tumbler of good whisky toddy, an' ebery niggah had to take a tas'e to de little Missie's health. Den, arter dey all go back to de fiel', Massa he say to me, sez he:

" 'David, ef ennyting should ebber happen to me, I kalkerlates on yo' mindin' de little Missie.' And sez I to him, sez I: ' 'Fore de Lawd, Massa, I will;' an' I has dun it eber sense, an' I'm takin' keer uv her to dis heyer day; " taking up a handful of grass and thrusting it in the basket.

"De little Missie wur born 'bout Easter time, an' dey call her 'Lily,' do'h de name in de good book wur writ 'Lillian,' like her ma,



“ Mammy an’ de li’l Missie’ ”

an' dat's what's ingraded on dis tomb"—pointing to the letters which he had learned to spell out.

"How de little one did grow! An' she grow jist like de flowers—as white and straight as de lilies, an' her cheeks like de roses, an' her eyes jes' like dem blue violets at yer feet, an' her curls, when she cum flyin' down dat walk, dey looked jis' like de sun what shines on all de flowers."

Tears filled the old man's eyes as he conjured up this picture of the little "Missie"; then in a despairing tone he said, shaking his head:

"I can't tell you, Massa, what she wuz like, unless it wuz a angel, which she wuz, but we didn't know it."

"Was she the only child?" I asked.

"No little Massa ebber did cum, an' no more little Missie. She wuz de only little chile what wuz raised up in our guardin heyer, but when she wuz a big gal, wid her curls platted down her back, an' tied wid blue ribbins, he cum here"—pointing to the other grave.

"Massa didn' have but one sister, an' she died an' lef' jes' dis one boy, Massa Harroll, named fur his uncle, an' my Massa an' my

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Missis say: 'Le's bring him here to play wid de little Missie, 'cause she's lonesome wid no udder chile.'

"Dey clean forgit she wur risin' fifteen year ole. An' when he cum he wuz mos' a man, eighteen year ole, an' as fine an' hansum a boy as you'd a wanted to see. He mus' a look'd like de Massa when he wuz a young man, when her ma fell in lub wid him; an' she wuz de pictur of her ma.

"So yer see jes' zactly how it wuz. Dey walked an' dey talked in dis heyer guardin jes' like two chillen. Dey wuz as happy as de day wuz long; an' little Missie she sing all day, jes' like de birds. I see'd jes' zactly how it wur, but my Massa an' my Missis hit seemed like dey wuz plum blin' tell one day, somehow, hit all cum out; dah eyes wuz opin.

"Dem wuz drefful times. My mammie she cry her eyes nearly out. My Mistiss she cry, an' de Massa he walk up an' down, an' up an' down dat fron' po'ch wid his han's behin' him. Ennybody could a see'd he wuz in trubble, an' one day de young man what had bin libin' in Hebben nigh onto two year wur sent away to collidge. He wuz awful set about it, fur he had de Massa's own tempah, an' he said to me:

“‘Uncle Dave’—de little Missie allus called me ‘Uncle Dave’—‘Uncle Dave,’ sez he, ‘I’m a cummin’ back to dis heyer guardin one o’ dese yer days; see ef I don’t.’ An’ sho ’nuff, here he is,” said Uncle Dave, wiping the moisture from his eyes.

“I nebber did know jes’ rightly what did happen. You see he wuz her fus’ cuzzin—blud kin, yer know—an’ dey didn’ like dat, an’ dey said he mus’ make a man o’ hissef, an’ lots more what young people don’t tink ’bout when dey’s in lub.

“De young Missie? Nobody said nuthin’ to her. Dey wouldn’t let de win’ blow on her rough ef dey could help it, but when dey sen’ him away, dey sen’ de heart outten her body. She wuz no longer a little gal, she wuz a full grow’d ’ooman all to once’t, tall, like a lily, an’ no more culler dan a lily, an’ she sing no mo’ song when she walk in dis heyer guardin. It make me sorry to see her, an’ hit made ’em sorry.

“I don’ know jes’ what would a happen ef jes’ den de wah hadn’t cum. But de wah cum, and den Massa was in sho ’nuff trubble agin. I could tell it by the way he walk’d up an’ down, an’ up an’ down dat yonder po’ch agin,

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wid his han's behin' him, an' talk to hisself. Massa wur a great han' to talk to hisself when he wuz in trubble.

"Den de naix ting, we wake up one mawnin' an' fin' all de niggahs gone to Camp Robber-son, 'cept me an' my mammie an' sum uv de wimmen an' chillen. Massa didn't seem ter keer 'bout dis. Sometimes I b'lieved he wuz right glad, 'cause he didn' know how to wu'k niggahs to git de good outen 'em, an' dey, cos' him more'n dey wuz wurf to feed.

"Den all to once't de fightin' got purty close to us, and de Massa tinks it time fur him to go, an' he riz a rigiment—dat's when they made him Massa Kernel—an' he went to de wah.

"I can't tell you, Massa, 'bout dem times; dey tried men's souls; dey tried my soul, but I jis' looked at it dis heyer way: My ole Massa he give my mammy an' me to my young Missett when she wur marr'd to sarve and take keer uv her long as she lived. An' I promised, de Lawd bein' my helper, I would. Now my ole Massa died widout eber settin' me free from dat 'sponsibility. No man kin set me free, an' when de Lawd sets me free I want to be laid right 'bout here sumwhar."

The old man got up painfully from his knees



“David, take good keer uv de Missus an’ de li’l Missie”

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and described at the feet of his little Missie the measure of a grave.

"I tole my Mistiss whar, an' she's got it in her will dat a little tom'stone mus' be put right here, whar my head will lay, an' on it: 'Faithful unto Death.'"

The old man stood gazing at the spot which he had selected for his mortal remains so long that I feared I would not hear the rest of the story. I called him back, however, by asking:

"And what happened after the Colonel went to the war?"

"So many tings, so many tings," he answered, with difficulty bringing his mind back. "In de fus' place, de berry las' words he said to me, sez he, 'David, take good keer uv de Missus an' de little Missie.' He knowed I wuz a gwine to do dat widout de axin', but hit eased his mind to ax me, an' den he wen' away."

The old man was again plunged in thought, living over, no doubt, the harrowing scenes of that period, for he took off his old hat and held it before his face, which he wiped with his shirt sleeve.

"I axes pardon, Massa, but I don' talk 'bout dis offen." Leaning upon his rake he continued:

"It wah'nt more'n a week arter he wuz gone 'fore one night somebody waked me up a knockin' on my do'. Dem wuz per'lous times, Massa, an' you didn' like to hear a knockin' on yo' do' in de ded uv de night. I tho't 'bout Missus an' de little Missie, so I crep' to de do' an' looked out troo de chink in de wall. De moon wuz a shinin' bright as de day, an' stan'-in' dar in de light o' de moon wuz him"—pointing to the grave at his feet. "I wish you could a seen him, jes' like a picter wid his sojer clo'es on an' his sword.

"He wuz a Capting, an' de picter uv his uncle. De sight struck me dum. Den he knocked agin an' say, 'Uncle Dave!'

"Den I opens de do' quick an' he takes my han' in hisn an' mos' squeeze hit in two, an' sez he, 'I'm gwine to de wah dis berry night, an' I mus' see her, you know who—my cousin Lily. Won't you fotch her to de oak tree whah we use to set?'

"I scratchez my head. I didn' know jes' what ter say; an' he say right quick: 'Mebbe hit tiz fur de las' time. Won't you, Uncle Dave?'

"I dunno whether I dun right or not, but I say 'I will.'

"An' den I walk wid him back to de house, an' while he wen' down to de ole oak tree at de foot uv de yard—yander hit tiz,"—pointing to a giant oak which seemed to stand guard over the lawn gate, a stone seat at its base, "I crep' up to de little Missie's winder an' calls her right easy. She wuzn't 'sleep, an' answered right quick:

" 'Uncle Dave?'

" 'Yes, Honey,' I sez, 'and' sez I, 'somebody else.'

" 'I know,' she answer, an' I b'lieve in her heart she wuz 'spectin' him, tho she'd never heerd one word from him sence he wen' away.

"In a minit she wuz dressed an' put her little white han' in mine to lead her. I dunno why she dun it, 'less mebbe she fel' like she could'n walk, an' I led her mos' to de tree, when he cum runnin' to meet her.

"When she saw his sword in de moonlight I could feel her trimble all ober, an' she shet her eyes an' stan' right still till he cum an' take her han' to lead her to de big stone yonder under de tree. I turn right roun' den an' walk up here in dese yer silver-leaf poplars, an' I nebber look'd roun' oncet. I couldn't b'ar to

see 'em a eatin' dar hearts out, so I jis' waited here till I hear him say:

" 'Uncle Dave!'

" I look'd 'round an' run hard as I could down de hill to 'em. She wuz a layin' in his arms in a dead faint. She nebber looked no deader when she lay in her coffin in her bed o' lilies, ten year ago cum nex' Easter.

" 'Take her to de house quick,' he sez ter me. 'Good-by, darlin',' he say to her, an' he kiss her eyes, an' her forrid, an' her cheeks, an' her mouf, den he lays her in my arms.

" 'Tek good keer uv her, Uncle Dave, tell I gits back,' sez he, an' he wuz gone.

" Massa, I did tek keer uv her as good as I could." And here the old man broke down. He could not speak for a little time, then wiping the tears away with the back of his hand he resumed in a heartbroken voice:

" But I couldn't keep her, Massa. She wuz a angel whut wuz never meant to stay here. But I'm takin' keer uv her grave, an' will lay at her feet like a dog when I can't do it no longer.

" De naix day I tole my Mistus, as I wuz in duty boun' to do, an' she jes' sez ter me, 'Lily tole me. I'm sorry,' sez she, 'he didn't cum

to de house so I mighter said ter him God-speed.'

" ' Mistus,' sez I, solemn like, ' has ennybody eber ax him ter cum back ter de house? '

" ' No,' she answer, an' turn away sorry like.

" Massa, I dunno how de time pars arter dat. Dar wuz fightin' here an' dah an' eberywhah, an' we couldn't keep up wid dem. One time when de wah wur nearly ober de Kernel slip in an' stays 'bout one hour. He had neber seed Massa Harroll but once, but he sez, sez he, ' I'm proud uv him. He's a brave sojer, an' he's a Kernel now.'

" He wuz at de table a eatin' uv de supper what my mammie had cooked fur him. I see little Missie's eyes git bright, an' de rose in her cheek onc't more, but it didn' stay long, fur de berry naix week cum de news:

" ' Kernel Harroll Dupuy an' his rigimen' wuz cut ter pieces in a gallan' cha'ge, an' de brave leader wuz lef' dead on de fiel'. ' Dem wuz de berry words, for I'll nebber forgit 'em.

" Missie saw de news fust, an' jes' shet her eyes an' fell ober on de settee. Dey brought her aroun' arter a while, but she nebber wuz herself agin. She wuz jes' like one o' de lilies, broken right offen de stem. Hit will lib in

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water fur a few days, den all at once't hits leaves drops off an' hit's gone.

"De Kernel cum back, an' she tried so hard to show him dat she wuz glad, but she couldn'. Her heart wuz gone. He seed it, an' he knowed ef he hadn' sen' Massa Harroll away dat time she mout a stood hit better.

"Hit wuz too late now. She jes' pine an' pine away, tell one day, settin' right out dar on de fron' po'ch, atween Massa Kernel an' de Missus, a holdin' of dair han's, she looked up in de sky fur a minit, wid de sweetes' smile you eber saw—I was a settin' on de steps at her feet—an' den all at once't her eyes shet an' her head fell over to one side, jes' as ef she had fell asleep. She wuz gone, Massa. Her heart wuz jes' broke, an' dat wuz all."

The old man walked away to a neighboring rosebush and began picking off the dead leaves. Neither of us could speak for a time. Then returning to the grave, he laid his bent and wrinkled hand affectionately upon the stone, as if he might have been caressing the head of a child.

"Then they brought him back and laid him beside her?" I asked.

"No, Massa," shaking his head. "He

brung hisself back. One night, not long arter we laid her here, while de lilies wuz a-bloomin', a'mos' makin' you sick wid dair sweet smell, when de sweetes' lily uv dem all wuz a-layin' dead 'mongst 'em, a stranger, weak an' po', cum limp'in' up to de po'ch.

"His clo'es, faded an' raggid, wuz sojer clo'es, we could see dat much, but dey wuz too big fur him. His eyes wuz holler, an' his beard an' his ha'r wuz two mont's long at de leas'. Massa Kernel axed him ter cum in, an' he'ped him up in de po'ch, wid me on one side, fur I wuz a-mowin' de yard in front an' could see he wuz skersely able ter walk.

"'David, run fas' an' fetch sumthin' ter eat,' sez my Missus; an' my Massa he goes in quick an' make a good strong toddy. I slip on my white ap'on, 'cause I see he wuz quality, an' when my mammie got de silver waiter an' fix on it some ham sandwiches an' col' chicken, an' some sal' risin' bread an' butter, an' a cup o' good strong coffee, I take it outen on de po'ch whah de stranger seemed ter be cummin' roun' frum de dizziness what struck him soon as he sot down.

"I knowed it wuz him in a minit, wid his hat off. So did Massa Kernel an' de Mistiss.

'Hit tiz Harroll!' dey bof say at once't, an' dey took his two han's in dair han's, an' den dey made him eat, an' talked right fas' so he couldn' ax any questions; but he kep' lookin' roun' like he wuz 'spectin' somebody ebery minit. But nobody cum. He look at me so pitiful, an' I went to cl'arin' up de dishes right quick.

" 'Haven' you furgive me yit?' he ax right slow, lookin' from one to de udder, my Massa an' my Missus.

" 'Has you furgive us?' dey axes him.

" 'P'raps you wuz right,' sez he. 'Dat wuz fo' year ago. I wuz nothin' but a boy den. I'm a man now, see '—gettin' up out uv de cheer slow like and drawin' hisse'f up like a Cap'n on p'rade. 'An' she mus' be a full-grown ooman now, my beautiful Lily.'

" 'Beautiful indeed!' said de Mistiss, turnin' away her head, while de Massa begin ter ax him how hit all wuz; an' he wuz a tellin' him how he'd bin lef' on de fiel' fur dead, an' how he mos' died in de horsepittal, but he didn'; an' soon as he could he started home. Den he turn to me right quick, an' he sez to me, sez he:

" 'Uncle Dave, you see I'm a welcome gues' dis time, now won'cher go tell her I've cum

back—ter stay?’ he sez, lookin’ fus’ at Massa Kernel an’ den at de Missus.

“‘Ter stay always,’ sez they, takin’ his two han’s agin.

“‘You hear dat, Uncle Dave? Go quick an’ tell her.’

“‘Yes, Massa,’ sez I, fur I didn’ know what else fur to say, an’ I step inside waitin’ for a sign or a word from Massa.

“‘She not here now,’ said de Massa, as stiddy like as he could, as if nothin’ wuz de matter; but dah wuz a trimble in his voice. I hear it an’ he hear it, an’ I see him turn his head slow like to de guardin. De moon wuz a shinin’ on dis heyer stone down heyer ’mong de silver-leaf poplars. He kotch sight uv hit, an’ I could see dat he kep’ his eyes fix stiddy on it. He didn’ say anudder word. He didn’ ax anudder question. D’reckly Massa Kernel say:

“‘You mus’ go ter bed now an’ git a good night’s rest, so you’ll be stronger in de mawn-in’.

“He didn’ say nuthin’, but let me he’p him inter de house. Den he sez ter me: ‘I’ll jes’ pull off my coat, Uncle Dave, for I’m so tired.’ An’ I didn’ cross him. He jes’ laid down on

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de settee. He sez: 'I ain't useter beds,' an' I see his ole smile on his face. He hel' out his han' ter me, an' sez he:

“ ‘ Good-night, Uncle Dave, I'll see her in de mawnin'.' ”

The old man bowed his head in his hands for a few moments, and the tears trickled through his fingers. He could scarcely speak.

“ An' so he did, Massa, fur when I cum here de naix mawnin', as I does ebery mawnin', he wuz a-layin' stretched ober her grave, dead, de Lawd only knows fur how long. He got well uv his gunshot an' his sword woun's—eberyting but de woun' in his heart, an' hit killed him.”

The old man busied himself with his rake. I plucked a few violets and an ivy leaf from the two graves to carry away with me. At parting I pressed the humble, honest hand. Neither of us cared to speak. I love to think of him now, freed from all sorrowing memories and pains, laid at the feet of those he loved, and to whom he was “ Faithful unto Death.”

IV

SPRINGTIME—AND LOVE

“ There is a day in spring,
When under all the earth the secret germs
Begin to stir and glow before they bud;
The wealth and festal pomps of midsummer
Lie in the heart of that inglorious hour,
Which no man names with blessing,
Though its work be blessed by all the world.”

ONE, two, three, four days dragged their weary length by. I had not known the twenty-four hours of a single day could be so long. Of Jack I saw next to nothing, since his time was chiefly taken up with the fair cousin of whom he had told me, but he made many promises of a good time ahead, as soon as I was settled.

My chief was out of town, and nothing could be settled until his return, which I now feared had been so long delayed that I would not be able to make the trip, most audaciously planned in my own mind, with Miss Claiborne by stage over the river. I reflected, however, that being a woman, it was not at all unlikely

that she would change her mind, and so hoping I continued my aimless wanderings from day to day, running across her pathway twice, rewarded each time by a swift, conscious glance, which assured me that I was at least remembered. The last day of the week brought my chief back to the city, and instead of going over the river, as I had hoped, I was ordered back to the East to await with such patience as I might the slow-moving processes of engineering work.

As good luck would have it, after backing and switching, my train was just moving out when I became aware of a sudden commotion about the shabby little station which I had just left. Miss Claiborne had not changed her mind, for there she stood surrounded by a party of friends, ever increasing in numbers, bearing flowers and bonbons and parcels innumerable, evidently gathered together for a word of farewell and pressure of her hand.

I had eyes for none of them, save the central figure of the group, and as I leaned impulsively from the window in my eagerness to have one last glance, I caught a fleet look of surprise which followed me as the train with accelerated speed bore me quickly out of sight.

She had not forgotten our chance meetings, and the hope that she might remember me accompanied me on my long journey eastward.

As each passing mile carried me farther and farther away, my heart burned and I became more and more occupied with the discovery made by this fleeting glance: how intensely, how acutely pleasant it had become to be looked at by this stranger, of whose very existence I had not known six days ago. With every revolution of the noisy wheels of the car was revealed to me the deep intensity of a new feeling, growing more fervid, more intense, seeming to keep time to the rhythmic whirring of the wheels.

As I looked abroad all the green hues of the earth, the blue of the heavens, the flower-scented air seemed full of the strange sweet rapture of living and loving and giving. I was eager to take the cup held out to me by nature, and drink of its fullness to the last drop. Then came the reaction, and I began to take myself seriously to task for having lost my equilibrium, because of a passing glance from this beauty; a coquette perhaps, whom good or bad fortune had purposely put in my way to lighten the boredom of a six months' exile in

the rugged fastnesses of the Kentucky cliffs about my work.

On the other hand, why should I take it for granted that because of her numerous admirers she employed the witcheries of a coquette? I had seen nothing to justify this conclusion. On the contrary, there was a certain spirituelle quality in her beauty, an earnestness of manner, a sweet seriousness in the even tones of her voice, which, even to a stranger like myself, betrayed qualities which must attract most men.

Then I fell to speculating concerning the indefinable something which attracts; that psychological influence which at some period of their lives sooner or later draws certain men and women together; that magnetic affinity for each other springing into existence at a look, or a tone, or a touch of the hand, as the electric spark kindles to a blaze insensate wood.

I recalled a young girl, deaf and dumb, and yet so sensitive to melody that her whole body would tremble and quiver with delight at the sound of music, which never reached her ears, but seemed to be communicated to her physical being by waves of delightful melody. Perhaps some day it will be given us to understand

the harmonies of love, which in electric waves unite

“Two souls with but a single thought,
Two hearts that beat as one;”

to understand these secret forces of nature of which we now know nothing.

Smiling at this conceit—the reducing of love to a science—I looked from the window of the car. I could not fail to note the changes wrought by a single week of springtime.

The sun-kissed fields were now well covered with mantles of verdure, and through the deeper greening of the woodlands I could descry the tender flush of the red bud, or the pure white blossoms of the dogwood, set like bouquets in the depths of the forests, which were now vocal with life.

A little three-year-old in the seat across the aisle—“Dacie”—clapping his chubby little hands with joy, called out:

“Oh, mamma, I saw a robin redbreast, and spring is here!” jumping up and down on the seat, in an ecstasy of joy.

My heart echoed the cry of the little lad, “Spring is here!” and I could almost feel my own blood coursing rampant through my veins.

Craning my neck that I might see the better from the window, I found the woods alive with a melodious tribe of song birds, newly arrived from their winter habitat, exchanging joyous greetings. The noisy jay, disporting his bright blue plumage flecked with white, was more garrulous than all the others in the exuberance of his joy over the home coming.

Here sure enough were the first harbingers of spring—the brave little robins, which had attracted Dacie—on the ground no doubt in advance of all others to welcome each new arrival. They were spick and span in their new clothes, their scarlet vests showing a pretty bit of color as they flew from tree to tree with their little brown mates. Joyous songs were in their throats, for they were about setting up housekeeping preparatory to a busy summer of providing food for perhaps two or three broods with gaping mouths to fill. For this they must of necessity be up and doing early, arousing all of the other birds with their morning carols. Their friend the bluebird was also here, having wintered perhaps not so very far away.

A bright red bird, the Kentucky cardinal, with a few sweet notes, darted hither and

thither, a bright dash of color amid the tender green leaves. A whole covey of cedar birds, in new coats, almost the color of the boughs upon which they rested, flecked with red and yellow, solemn and demure as little Quakers in meeting, expressed their pleasure at the reunion in a few soft, low notes, like polite gentlefolk. The gay bobolink, having changed his winter clothes of dull brownish yellow, all streaked with black, for spring attire of black and white and buff, was here. With his quiet little mate he had returned from the rice fields of the South, his throat full of rollicking roundelays, all about himself, the tall reed grass swaying gracefully beneath him as he plumed his wings and sang,

“Bobolink! Bobolink!
Spink! Spank! Spink!”

Perched high upon a tree top apart from all the others sat a black-capped thrush, coated in gray satin, glistening in the sun like silver, a rakish little black cap on his head. After a few preliminary calls to attract attention to himself, he began in clear, flute-like tones his little love sonnet. Meadow larks from the green fields were giving out their very souls

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in song, while from a distance in the deep woods came the tender cooing of the doves, calling to their mates, Dacie was right—spring had come.

The master hand working through Mother Nature had set the sap to flowing to unfurl the leaves; had burst the seed for the sprouting grain; had opened the bud for the blooming of the flower; had prompted the meeting of the birds with joyous songs, and so ordered that the most perfect creature of His handiwork—man—should share in this general awakening.

My mind now reverted to the picture of the dingy little station, glorified by Miss Claiborne's presence; to the suitors grouped about her; to the possibility of my prolonged absence, and I began to wish that I had spoken to Jack about her, in order that I might at least hear something of her.

I resolved to write to him immediately on my arrival in Baltimore, confiding to him this madness born of springtime in Eden. But somehow I never did, that indefinable "something" keeping me silent.

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Not until June did I receive instructions to return to the West, and within a few days

thereafter I was again traversing the charmed region which enchained my every waking thought. It was almost impossible to realize the great changes which had come over the face of these fertile lands in the few weeks which had elapsed since my first journey. The tender green of spring had given way to the deeper green of summer. The blooming orchards were now bending under their loads of ripening fruit, rosy-cheeked peaches and ripe red cherries peeping shyly from their green leafy coverts. The prim borders of April daisies, tulips, and hyacinths and jonquils had all disappeared, and in their stead pink and scarlet geraniums were disporting their gaudy gowns in the flower beds, while the kitchen gardens were all abloom with marigolds and petunias, and foxglove, lady's slipper and pretty-by-nights. The banks of every little rill were beds of wild flowers. The fields were already showing signs of the approach of the harvest in the full ears of the bearded grain, almost ready for the touch of gold which would complete their fruition.

Having arrived at Lexington, I found orders awaiting me to go over the river and proceed directly to Harrodstown to interview

our attorney concerning a little legal quibble, and make that point my headquarters until the matter was adjusted. I retired that night disappointed, and without reason. With the longest reach of imagination, I could not have expected to have duplicated my former experience. I heard no word of Miss Claiborne. Of necessity, I resigned myself to the inevitable, only hoping that some lucky chance would soon bring us within speaking distance at least—and the rest? My work would necessarily bring me within easy reach of Bellevue, and—who could say what might happen? Such delightful possibilities always lurk in propinquity. With this pleasing thought I fell asleep.

On the following morning at the appointed time I was deposited at the same dingy little station, which had been so glorified with her presence a few weeks before. I was a little late, and thinking ruefully of how different this trip “over the river” would be from the one I had first planned, I entered the car, in which I found the seats pretty well taken, and had proceeded more than halfway up the aisle when my steps were suddenly arrested.

There sat Miss Claiborne, with Jack beside

her, talking so earnestly that he did not see me as I passed them a few seconds later. This, then, was Jack's beauty? A premonition of pain sat heavily upon me. I would have turned back if possible, or passed through, but it was too late. Jack had caught sight of me, and following laid a detaining hand upon my arm.

"Hello, old man! I beg pardon, Anthony. Where do you drop from now? From the East? We were all so surprised that day to see you go whirling away without even a good-by."

"Yes, it did seem a little discourteous to you," I admitted, "but I did not know where to find you, and had no time to drop you a note before leaving, and kept thinking I would write, but didn't——"

"So I told Miss Claiborne. She seemed quite disappointed at not meeting you—such a good friend of mine, you know. Which way are you bound now?"

"Over the river for rather an indefinite stay."

"So sorry! I wanted to introduce you to some girls before you got away last spring, but you see I was so occupied when you were here with—with my cousin—the girl, you

know, I told you about," blushing like a school-boy. "She's on the train now; the *handsomest* woman in Kentucky" (whispering). This said after the fashion, as I found later, of all Kentucky men, their possessions, no matter what, being always of the superlative degree of fineness, or goodness; and they really mean it.

"A self-evident fact," I answered, a little tamely it seemed to me, glancing over his shoulder.

"See here, old man—I beg pardon—why didn't you tell me then that she had spent that first night in the hotel last April—I mean that you had seen her; just let me rave about her without saying a word?" reproachfully.

"How could I know it was she?" a little sheepishly, I fear, for I might indeed have known there was but one such. "I came to Kentucky expecting to find beauties like the leaves in Vallombrosa."

"That's about right—the *prettiest* girls in the world."

I was then introduced to Miss Claiborne by Jack.

"This is Mr. Anthony Conway, my friend, and the best fellow I know. Miss Claiborne is

my cousin, of whom I told you, Tony," smiling rapturously.

"And my cousin as well, if having the same grandfather two hundred years or so ago counts," I responded, pressing the taper fingers so cordially held out to me. I had been making some inquiries of my mother while in the East.

"Indeed it does. We Claibornes love everybody bearing a drop of our blood in their veins. Don't we, Jack?"

"We certainly do," glancing tenderly into the uplifted eyes.

"Then we will have to count it up and find out exactly how many drops we have in common, and square accounts," I answered. "That, however, will take a little time, you know."

"Mind you count square," interposed Jack.

"I warn you I will prove a veritable Shylock, and demand the last drop," said I, in reply, with a little more earnestness perhaps than was called for, I alone being conscious of that, however.

"Lucky dog! I wish I were going with you," said Jack, slapping me upon the back so heartily that I came near losing my breath.

"So sorry you are not going over with us," said Miss Claiborne to Jack, in pleasing, pleading tones. How sweet the little pronoun "us" sounded, establishing, as it were, a community of interest in Jack, which was a point gained.

"I will be with you by the end of a week, if nothing turns up to prevent," he responded.

With a nod she assented, for the warning bell was ringing, and Jack was forced to say good-by, holding her hand a trifle longer than I considered good form, a cousinly privilege of which I made note.

I accompanied him to the door.

"I can trust you, old man?" a little anxiously I thought.

"You can trust me," I answered with more seriousness than the occasion seemed to justify. We then bade each other farewell.

The train was in motion when I returned to her, and Jack, standing with bared head upon the platform, was waving his adieu, she looking back, fluttering her handkerchief as long as he was in sight. How handsome he was! What a noble fellow he had proved himself to be; well worthy of the girl beside me, for she had most graciously made a place for me on the same seat.

"He introduced me as the best fellow in the world. That was a mistake. He is the best fellow. I fear I will prove only a poor second," I said lightly, feeling that this much was due my friend to whom I had promised loyalty. In racing parlance I feared this would most likely hold good.

She smiled—assent, perhaps; who can tell the mind of a belle, or divine the meaning of her smiles? The short half hour necessary to make the trip by rail from Lexington—so quickly spent—served to make us somewhat acquainted and prepare us for the more picturesque journey before us.

V

THE STAGE—THE CLIFFS—AND LOVE

ARRIVED at Nicholasville, we found the old-fashioned stage coach and four drawn up at the station, ready to make the trip over the cliffs of the Kentucky River. The inside seats were already occupied save one. I must have looked disappointed, for the driver hastened to say:

"That's all right; Miss 'Lisbeth always rides on top."

Miss 'Lisbeth nodded her head in confirmation, and added: "There is plenty of room up there for both of us. You must not fail to sit on the outside making the trip over the cliffs. It is the *grandest* scenery in the world."

This charming Kentucky girl, superlative herself in all of nature's attributes, had already caught the trick of her fathers, of generations past and gone, who had always "the best" of everything. How could I hope to ride over the cliffs in close proximity to such

great fairness without losing my head? Nevertheless, greatly to my satisfaction, we climbed to our lofty perches, Miss Claiborne occupying the seat behind McCluskey, and I close beside her.

"From Nicholasville to the river is down grade purty nigh all the way," said McCluskey, gathering up his reins and whip, preparatory to a grand flourish and start. We had fresh horses, and they plunged eagerly forward at the cracking of the whip. I had no idea before how much there was in the proper starting of a coach. At my side was the horn, which I seized and essayed to blow, with indifferent success, as we rattled through the streets of the little village. Even Miss Claiborne was pleased to make merry at my expense, and laughed over my failure, for not a soul gave token that they were aware of our passing.

This did not suit McCluskey, for, taking the horn from me, he blew such a blast that I could hear the echoes reverberating among the hills for several seconds. At the sound the windows and doors flew open as if by magic, and eager faces appeared, smiling a salute as we passed. Beturbaned "black mammies,"

with aprons thrown over their heads to shield their faces from the sun, waved towels and dishcloths in token of greeting, as we whirled by, while pickaninnies by the score scrambled over each other in the wild rush for points of vantage, which having gained they sat upon the fence rails, like a flock of crows, solemn and smiling.

The horses, as if by instinct, now began to slacken their pace, and turning a bend in the road we came suddenly upon a barrier—a stout pole—stretched from side to side across the way. It was a movable construction, as soon appeared—a toll gate, in fact—for in a twinkling a rosy-cheeked, buxom matron appeared, laid hold of the chain, and while the long pole, weighted heavily at the farther end, released from its mooring, slowly ascended, she was passing the compliments of the day with McCluskey in a rich brogue, which proclaimed her Irish descent. Not overlooking Miss Claiborne, she called out:

“The top o’ the mornin’ to yer, Miss ’Lisbeth. It wor the Kernel hisself passed this way yesterday, and he said yer would be comin’ along ter-day wid Misther McCluskey, and I thought, mayhap, it would be a dhrink o’

nice cool wather, fresh frim the spring, you'd be afther wantin', so I sent Micky to the spring." Then, lifting her voice, she called:

"Micky! Micky! ye spalpeen; what mischief are ye afther now, with Miss 'Lisbeth and Misther McCluskey awaitin' fur the wather?"

Just then, an urchin, bringing a bucket and a gourd, appeared around the corner and we were all regaled with the refreshing beverage—thanks to "Miss 'Lisbeth"—a sweet name on the Irish tongue—whose father, "The Kernel," I afterwards learned, was the President of the road, and dispenser of toll gates.

"See! How beautiful!" exclaimed Miss Claiborne, pointing out, as we bowled rapidly over the fine turnpike road, an old "worm fence" made of rails laid in zigzag fashion, separating the field from the roadway. It was indeed beautiful, for the Virginia creeper and wild oak vine, fastening their tendrils in the soft wood, wrapped it about so closely that the rails were scarcely visible. Then running up the stakes, which bound them together, and twining the "riders" with their rich green foliage, and trumpet-shaped flowers of red and yellow,—for want of further support, fell

away from the highest point, and swung to the earth, great cordons of verdure and bloom, swaying back and forth with every passing breeze. In the corners were clumps of blackberry bushes, now covered with their white blossoms. Beyond these fences, vast acres of uplands and lowlands stretched miles and miles away into three counties visible from this elevated plateau.

The day was warm for early June, but pleasant by reason of the little breeze stirred by the moving stage, as we were carried swiftly along past fine woodland pastures and the rolling meadow lands, through which the roadway ran, unfolding a magnificent panorama before us. For a time we sat silent, drinking in the beauties of the picture so patent on every side. Over us hung skies blue as those of the Campagna, adding new depths to her lustrous eyes; and the little pink silk shade with which she hid her face from the sun, tinted her cheeks with the color of the wild rose, blooming on every side, making her far more beautiful than I had even dreamed. The rare grace of her supple body, which lent itself easily to the swaying, undulating movement of the coach, added a new charm, bringing her, as it did mo-



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mentarily almost within my clasp, if I only dared stretch out my arm. For some minutes, ten perhaps, as time flew by, we rode thus in silence, down the shaded road, where the earth showed greenest in its fresh new carpet, and the sunlight piercing the light foliage of the trees, falling in irregular patches upon the verdant sward, flecked it with gold. The warm air freighted with the perfume of many flowers enveloped us like incense from unseen censers.

To ride with her thus:—what more could I desire? I was speechless, for I did not care to disturb the sweet companionship thus tacitly established between us. It was she who first broke the silence, and her voice, soft as velvet, with its charming little Southern accent, was most fascinating, though she was only calling my attention to the changing aspect of the country, which was growing more broken and rough.

The fences had disappeared entirely, and the road seemed to be now sloping downward between natural barriers of stone. Cultivation was abandoned, and the rich soil lodged in the crevices was usurped by brambles and the natural undergrowth, which imparted a wild

aspect to the hitherto peaceful prospect. As we advanced, the rocks seemed to grow bolder, and dispute our passage, but they were marked with rugged beauty, clasping close in their seamy crevices both verdure and bloom. To the right of the road there was an abrupt slope, so covered with stunted cedars and pines and clinging vines, that we scarcely realized the danger of our passage down the narrow way. A stone, loosened by the ponderous wheels, rolled over the edge, striking and bounding from point to point in its descent through space, which seemed almost interminable, accentuating, as it fell, the silence.

"Look!" said Miss Claiborne, pointing to a perpendicular wall of rock some three hundred feet high, on the other side of the chasm. "That is the other side of the river, and you will ascend the face of that wall, just as we are descending this narrow road now."

"Except that I will be alone," I answered in a subdued voice.

For reply she lifted her eyes for a moment to mine, then quickly veiled them. Silence once more fell between us; a silence more eloquent than words, for in this great Kentucky canyon, between these cliffs that rise almost

sheer beside you, one becomes impressed with the solitude; a solitude heightened rather than lessened by the glimpses to be had at intervals of the few straggling homes away down in the valley below. Yet, even in the most solitary places, our eyes were gladdened with gay patches of bright color, wild pinks, and rhododendron, and the air was fragrant with the spicy odor of the eglantine, clambering over the rock, and the aromatic fragrance of the pines.

The lumbering coach was sped on its downward way by a chorus of bird songs, blackbirds, robins, catbirds, jays, thrushes, yellow-hammers, the wooded portions of the cliffs seeming fairly alive with them, for in these fastnesses they were as secure from disturbance as when they nested in the heart of the wilderness before the invasion of the hunter.

Here McCluskey tightened his hold upon the reins, and with foot pressed firmly against the brake, slowly and steadily pursued his downward course, now and again turning suddenly the sharp angle of a projecting mass of stone, for the road traversed a circuitous route cut out of the face of the solid cliff. To my

trained eye, it seemed fraught with danger for an unwieldy coach drawn by spirited horses.

“Do accidents ever happen on this road?” I asked of McCluskey.

“Not often; once, a long time ago, a coach tumbled over, but that was not in my day.”

Just at that moment, the left wheel of the swaying vehicle struck a large stone, just fallen from above, and concealed by one of the angles of projecting rocks, which occurred at frequent intervals. The coach lurched violently toward the chasm. There was a shriek from the inside. My own heart stood still, and 'Lisbeth, with every vestige of color leaving her cheeks, seized my hand with both of hers—for she was on the side nearest the chasm. With my disengaged arm I drew her quickly to me, prepared to leap from the box. With a less skillful driver there would perhaps have been a plunge to certain death. Luckily it was only a few seconds until McCluskey had the horses under control, the stage righted, and we were again steadily and slowly pursuing our downward journey to the bottom, where the Kentucky River flowed sluggishly between these solid walls of stone.

My own heart, which had almost ceased to beat at the nearness of a frightful accident, now began to send its wild currents through my body as 'Lisbeth with her face still hidden upon my shoulder grasped my hand tightly. I could feel her warm body, still pressed close in my arms, quivering with nervous dread. She did not speak, and I became alarmed, fearing lest she had swooned—a fear shared by the driver, I think, for after a little he spoke to her.

“It is all right now, Miss 'Lisbeth,” said McCluskey, in his most soothing tones.

She shivered a little, but made no answer.

“'Lisbeth,” I whispered anxiously, “Miss Claiborne,” I called a little louder, bending close to her ear. “The danger is all past, and we have nearly reached the river.”

Slowly she seemed to hear what we were saying, and raising her head, looked about her, still holding fast to my hand, for she realized that we had faced a great danger.

“Wasn't it dreadful?” she asked. Then seeing that my arm was still about her, she with gentle dignity withdrew herself from my clasp—too late.

"A living coal! And with its glow
It touched another coal, when lo!
The darkness into radiance grew.
A loving heart! And with its love
It touched another heart; above,
Hope smiled the rifted clouds all through."

A burning blush suffused her cheeks, as with tender reverence she said:

"I am very thankful our lives were spared."

She now sat erect, and began straightening out her hat, which had suffered from its impact with my shoulder. The pretty pink-lined parasol, with which she had been shading her face so bewitchingly from the sun earlier, was broken. She looked at it ruefully for a moment, then smiled.

"I suppose I should make some apology for throwing myself so unreservedly at you—or rather into your very arms; but, really I can't. If it was all to do over again, I fear I would do the same thing. I have such a cowardly, weak heart. You see the coach was really careening *my* way, and—and," in tremulous voice, "it must have been the instinct of self-preservation, I think, which caused me to gravitate *your* way," looking up with troubled eyes.

"Thereby reversing the laws of gravitation, which would naturally have drawn you over with the coach. It was lucky that you did not knock me off," I answered in lighter vein, striving to relieve her embarrassment.

"Promise me at least that you will not tell anyone of my faint heart in the face of danger," a little flush creeping up into her pallid cheeks, as with trembling hands she tried to piece together the frail little silken sunshade. I suspected that she was struggling with tears, now ready to flow, since the tension was over.

"It shall always be a sweet little secret between us, of which this trifle shall be the token," I answered, taking from her the battered sunshade, and slipping it into the breast pocket of my coat. For a moment she lifted her eyes to mine, surprised, perhaps (?) What she saw there, I cannot say, but she veiled hers immediately, neither giving or refusing consent to my appropriation of the little souvenir. McCluskey drove on, carefully, seemingly entirely occupied with his horses, and in a few moments, seconds it seemed to me, we had reached the end of our journey together, the river side. Here we paused, awed and silent,

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or spoke to each other in low tones, so distinct was every sound in the vast solitude.

A blast from McCluskey's horn now broke the silence. Its notes seemed multiplied into a regimental band, as the slumbering echoes awoke and repeated them over and over again until they died away in the distant chasm. Before it had ceased, a "Hallo!!!" was started from the other side, clear and distinct, and was tossed back and forth among the rocks until it, too, died away. Then a boat shot out from the other side, and propelled by long poles, crossed the stream, slowly, silently, scarce seeming to move. It was a long, flat-bottomed affair, able to carry the coach and four without inconvenience, as we soon found. Giving me the reins, McCluskey climbed down, and busied himself unhitching the traces of the horses.

The inside passengers all remained within the coach. Miss Claiborne and I alighted from our lofty perch. Handing the reins back to the driver, I swung myself over the wheel. Without a question I lifted her down. She was still avoiding my eyes, and had meant to jump from the wheel, as was, no doubt her custom, but knowing how very much unstrung

she must be, I baffled her intention by silently taking her into my arms, and depositing her gently in the bottom of the boat. Without even a glance she walked slowly to the forward part, I following humbly in her wake. Had I offended past forgiveness?

When she halted we were quite alone, seemingly shut in by the granite walls, rising on either side so far up into the vast expanse of ether above that the blue sky seemed to rest upon them like a canopied dome, while the floating clouds hung like fleecy mantles upon the tree tops which crowned their heights.

Resting her arms upon the high rail of the boat, with averted face, she seemed to be watching a flight of noisy crows crossing the channel. Far above, almost out of sight, a large vulture, at that distance grand and majestic as an eagle, to whose lofty heights he aspired—his outstretched wings catching the light of the sun, which was hidden from our view—circled round and round with graceful pendulous motion, till finally he disappeared from sight over the cliffs.

The fresh river wind, blowing down the narrow channel, was swaying her light spring gown, and her lithe body, like a tall fragile

flower in a stiff breeze, and the blood was now sending crimson currents into her cheeks. Slowly she withdrew her eyes from the skies, and turning them earthward, I fell once more within her range of vision, which was no longer steady, but disturbed, as I felt my own to be. We were standing so close together that we could each almost hear the beating of the other's heart.

"Forgive me," I begged, fearing that in my anxiety I had taken too great a liberty. For a moment she stood irresolute, then lifting her eyes to mine, answered:

"Upon one condition."

"That it is the last offense of the kind?" I asked.

Gravely she bowed her head and there was no further speech between us. We were both thinking of the same thing, no doubt. A few weeks ago, neither of us knew of the existence of the other, and now after an acquaintance only a few hours old, after a few moments of impending danger shared together, we were certainly closer than mere friends.

"Am I to believe that?" I asked presently.

It had been so long since either of us had spoken that her thoughts had wandered seem-

ingly far afield, for she asked, lifting her eyes again to mine for a moment.

"Believe what?"

"That I am forgiven?"

Again she bowed her head. "If I have your promise?"

"Then, since hereabouts is to be the scene of my labor, may I hope to see you sometimes?" She hesitated.

"Once in a great while," I added, "in the way of charity to a stranger in a strange land—and most forlorn—and—I promise."

As I said this, I really pitied myself, for close beside me was the pretty profile, clear cut as a cameo; the fine sensitive nose, the sweet rose-tinted cheek—dainty as the wild rose dropped at my feet—the cherry lips, breaking into a smile, as she hearkened to my plea, which—after a moment's hesitation, like a cat, perhaps, playing with a mouse—she answered:

"If you wish it a very great deal. Agreeable acquaintances are not so plentiful in this part of the country, since the war, that we can afford to spare even one. Besides—you said we were cousins."

"True," I answered. "I will not forget that, and by the time we meet, I will have cal-

culated how many drops of blood we claim in common, and just how much we owe each other."

We were now nearing the shore, where her father was awaiting her. After the greeting was over, she introduced me as "a friend of Jack's—a college mate, and a far away cousin." The Colonel received me with old-fashioned courtesy, assuring me of a warm welcome at his house.

"He will be here for some time," continued the daughter, "building the new bridge," betraying a little anxiety, I thought, in look and tone.

"Ah, I see,"—a little coldly. "Do you think, Mr. Conway, you can improve upon that monument of folly?" pointing to the superb towers which crowned the cliffs on either side, making a most attractive feature in the distant landscape. "A hundred thousand dollars spent upon those towers, from which to suspend a bridge—and when finished, they could not use them for swinging a cat across that chasm, much less a bridge."

"In picturesque effect, possibly not, but we hope to succeed better in point of utility," I replied, looking admiringly at the four sym-

metrical stone columns—two on either side of the river, built of solid masonry, so high that the slender pinnacles seemed like needles piercing the sky. On closer inspection, I afterward found them broad enough on top to stand four horses abreast, and instead of being twin towers, there was sufficient space between to run the railroad which now traverses High Bridge, leaving the towers an enduring monument to the great enterprise.

“My dear sir,” said the Colonel, “they were sold at auction for four dollars; a dollar each. Think of that.”

“And dear at that,” I answered. “It would scarcely pay one anything to take them down, stone by stone, for the material that is in them.”

All of this time Miss Claiborne had been superintending the transfer of her parcels from the stage into the buggy, and they were soon ready to drive off. I could only hold 'Lisbeth's hand—for I must ever after call her “'Lisbeth” to myself at least—in mine for a second, a single, blissful second it seemed, though it may have been ten minutes, while saying “good-by.” I had but one more glance into the pretty eyes, from which the

veil was lifted, not a second it seemed, and they were gone, leaving me standing where they had left me, gazing after them, until they had disappeared behind the rocks, my heart beating tumultuously.

If I had ever before believed myself in love, I now knew it was not true. I had deceived myself—and yet—I had reached the age of thirty-five. I was like the knight of the Silver Lily. I had fallen over seas in love with her; my fancy had been caught at the first sight of her fair face. And now?—my heart was cast after my fancy

“Like any spendthrift who his fortune sets
Upon the turning of a die.”

VI

THE TEAMSTER, THE DRUMMER, THE POLITICIAN

WHEN the cliffs had shut the fast-receding buggy with its occupants from my view, I turned again to the river, an inconsiderable stream it now seemed at this point, wending its way slowly to its junction with the Ohio.

Looking from the water to the summit of the cliffs, it seemed impossible that even in hundreds of thousands of years it could have worn for itself so deep a channel.

It looked more like a mighty chasm which had been opened in the earth by some volcanic upheaval, and the rocks being rent in twain, the waters rushed in and were thenceforth confined to this narrow channel for all time.

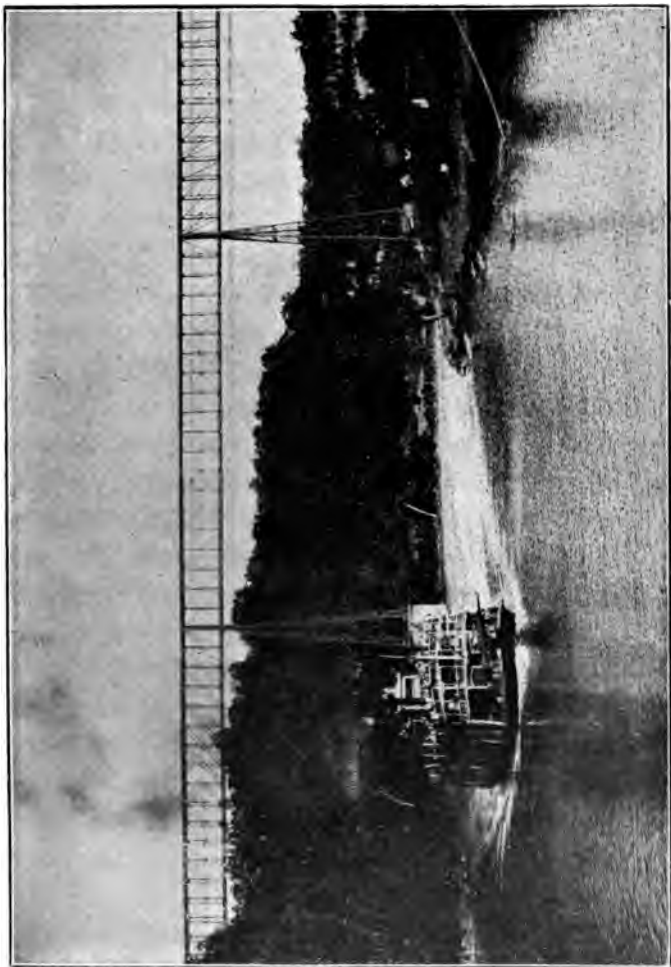
The distance from the river bed to the top of these palisades of solid stone measured some 300 feet, and the distance between them was so great that it had been found necessary to abandon the suspension bridge, which would

have been the highest bridge in the world with so great a span.

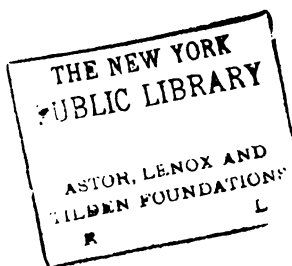
The new plan under consideration, if successful, would still make of it a most marvelous feat of engineering. This plan called for three immense spans, three hundred and seventy-five feet each, with no other support from bluff to bluff than two steel piers two hundred and seventy feet high, reaching from the bed of the river where they had their foundation in solid masonry, to the bridge where the spans were joined.

This plan did prove successful, and the great "High Bridge" over the Kentucky River, as a specimen of modern engineering, is one of the wonders of the world. The scenery is sublimely grand, and the bridge itself, viewed from the river level, looks like mere threads of steel, suspended in the air, while the cars, traveling slowly and carefully over them, look like a caravan of ants.

This, however, I saw then only in my mind's eye, while the ferrymen were making the boat fast, alongside of a flatboat full of coal, brought down from the mountains to be distributed from this point to the surrounding country by means of wagons, one of which was



“The great ‘High Bridge’ over the Kentucky River”



now being loaded, while the horses, detached, were eating from a rough trough near by.

McCluskey was busy fastening the traces—which had been unhitched on entering the boat—preparatory to a strong pull up the river bank.

To lighten his load, I concluded to stroll along on foot until overtaken.

“Whack! Ack! Ack! Ack!”

The sharp sound seemed so close to my ears that it startled me, and I paused a moment to listen to the reverberating echoes, sounding much like a volley of musketry.

Turning suddenly the sharp corner of one of those large projections of stone which, on this side also, seemed to mark the curves in the road, I was ushered into a narrow strip of level land, on which were nestled a few little rough cottages right at the base of the cliff, hidden away from the sight of everything save the wild beasts and the birds, and the chance visitor to “Cogar’s Landing,” so called for the owner of the ferry.

Standing in the road just behind the rock was a teamster, a stout mulatto boy, waiting for his wagon, which was being loaded at the river side.

He had an unusually bright and intelligent face. In his hand he carried a long "black-snake whip," which he was whirling around his head, cracking it in the most scientific manner, greatly to the delight of a small urchin who was capering about him in all the glory of his first pants and "galluses"—the latter of home manufacture, knitted of bright red yarn, by loving hands, no doubt.

The stage being so far behind, I stopped for a moment.

"Whoa, Hoss! Whoa!" said the teamster to the little lad. "Dat's a fine new red harness what youse got on. Ain't it?"

The little fellow's heart was too full for utterance. He looked shyly up at me, then fixed his eyes on his new suspenders.

"You'll havter be mighty keerful how you cavorts up an' down dese heyer hills, else you'll bust de breechin', some time, shore," a bright smile illuminating the good, strong face as he humored the lad in his talk.

The little fellow rammed his hands down in his pockets, and from one of them brought out a square of ginger-cake.

"An' you'll havter keep dat ginger-br'ed outen yo' pockit, ef yer don' wan' de swet

bees ter foller yer. De swet bees is mighty keen after hosses, an' de sting hurts powerful bad."

"Whack!" went the whip, once more awakening the echoes which had scarce died out, and the little fellow renewed his prancing after the manner of his equine friends.

By this time I was joined by one of the inside passengers, whom I took to be a drummer, so familiar did he seem with the country and the people, wherever we halted.

"Is the Captain at home?" he asked of the teamster.

"Yassur. He gut home last night from Frankfut."

"Still hearty, is he?"

"'Bout stout as ever. De screws seem to keep purty tight. Onc't in awhile dey wants a little greasin' but not much."

"So he keeps a-going?"

"Yassur, he keeps a-gwine. Sometime I think de tyers are beginning to war a little thin on de aiges, and de runnin'-gear is gettin' a little shacklin'—it can't stan' what it uster, but I reckon it'll all run together fur menny a year yit."

"I believe you are right."

"Who is the Captain?" I asked.

"Why, dat's de ole hoss I'm talkin' 'bout."

"I thought it was a wagon."

"Same t'ing; de waggin's no good widout de hoss."

"He fetched comp'ny home wid him las' night—one uv dese heyer pollytitions, what is always hangin' aroun'. I dunno what dey calls 'em Polly fur, 'less it's 'cause deys like de parrots, fur talk."

"Who is it?"

"I can't jist 'zactly 'member de name, dere's so many uv 'em cummin' an' a-gwine. He was purty much broken-winded when he gut heyer. He'd bin a spekin' ober dah at de barbecue in de forks uv Dick Ribber; but he fed well. Dey ain't much de matter wid a hoss what feeds well, and all dese fellers does dat, shore."

The drummer laughed heartily and the rocks joined in his merriment.

"It's a fac, boss. Why, even de yaller-legged chickens know dat; and dey has gut so dat dey runs fur de bushes, jes' as soon as dey hears de Cap'n 'hello' across de ribber—jes' de same as ef it wuz a Methodis' preacher

comin' down thar a-singing of his sam' tunes. Dey does, fur a fac'."

By this time McCluskey had overtaken and passed us, and I was about to start on.

"No hurry," volunteered my companion. "They will stop a little further on to change horses, and we will overtake them."

"What did you say your name was?" he asked the teamster.

"Well, boss, I don't remember dat I said anyt'ing 'bout dat, but I don' mind tellin' you: Jeems Gritten. Mos' folks calls me Jim fur short, a heap o' people calls me Yaller Jim, an' Miss M'riar, dat's my ole Miss in slavery times, she calls me Bell's Jim, 'cause dere wuz a heap o' yudder Jims."

"You've been talkin' very free about the preachers and politicians, Jeems. How do you know I ain't one myself?"

"Haw, haw, haw!" shouted Jim, with the hills to keep him company, "You reckon I can't size up one ov you drummer men, as good as a chicken kin a preacher?"

"But I may be a politician?"

"I don't put it parst you. You shorely kin talk, but I don't b'lieve you is. Howsomever, I ain't got no doubts but you'd feed jes' as

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well as enny uv 'em, 'specially after gettin' one uv de Cap'n's mint-juleps, what keeps off de cramps and de cheels down here in dis bot-tom. Not too much water and a leetle sugar, an' a leetle sprig o' mint."

The drummer smacked his lips.

"The Cap'n's got a big bed o' mint up der side o' de spring handy. He say a rale ole Firginny gen'man is berried dah. I dunno 'bout dat. Mebbe he say so ter keep de cullud folks away, 'cause dey's feared of ghostes: dey is. I ain't—'cause I don' believe nobody is berried dah.

"Den, you see, all he's got to do is to take his dimijon up thar, an' a little loaf sugar in his pocket."

"Jim," interrupted the drummer, lowering his voice, "do you think we could find that spring?"

"I don' know nothin' to hinder; dah's a mighty smoov, clean paf troo de bushes to dat ar spring." Jim rammed his hands down in his pockets; he took them out, hitched first one "gallus" up on one shoulder, and then the other. He then took off his old weather-beaten hat and scratched his head while his curious, squirrel-like jaws, which he had shut

up like a pair of nut crackers, unpuckered, and a broad grin spread over his face as he continued:

“I ’clar’ to gracious ef yer mouth ain’t a-waterin’ same as a ole hoss, a-hangin’ uv his head ober de bars inter a clover patch. I was jes’ a-talkin’ to hear myself talk. Dey ain’t no spring, and dey ain’t no mint-bed but what’s in de guardin.”

Jim had evidently been raised in a stable and from horses and wagons he took all of his similes.

It will not be inappropriate to say right here that the last seen of Jim, a few years ago, he was a porter on a Pullman palace sleeper. He could not be entirely divorced from his craft by the change of times and transit, so he stuck to the wheels after the horse was gone. “An’ I wuz tired a-wrastlin wid de cole, anyhow,” he said.

Following the road a few rods further on brought us to the little hamlet, a half dozen or more houses clustering about a large barn or store house upon the plateau, now a little above the river. At high water it was no doubt upon a level with it. In this warehouse I found the *raison d’etre* of the little village.

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It was the receptacle for the grain of all the surrounding country, which was hauled to this point for shipment, for at some seasons the river was high enough to permit the passage of good-sized boats.

"Cogar's Landing" had been named for the bluff old riverman, who had piloted the ferryboat in his young days and afterward established the warehouse and the little store, out of which industry he had managed to accumulate a snug fortune.

Of late years the ferry and shipping and store had been turned over to his son, while the captain had turned his attention to politics. Enjoying the respect and confidence of the whole community, he had been sent twice to the legislature, was a member at this time, and was good for as many more terms as he desired, so highly was he esteemed for his honesty and integrity. All of this I learned from the drummer, as we sauntered up the road toward the Captain's house, a pretty frame cottage, painted white, with vines and flowers clambering all over the porch.


Two straight rows of flowers bordered the smooth graveled walk from the house to the gateway, which was guarded on either side by

groups of hollyhocks, standing stiff as sentinels in martial array. Over the fence crept a luxurious trailing vine, the prairie rose, which was now covered with great clusters of buds, a promise of many flowers.

In the doorway, seated upon the topmost step, in his shirt sleeves, was a stalwart, fine-looking man, of thirty, perhaps, busily engaged in whittling a stick; a favorite pastime, if one might judge from the whittlings scattered about him. In his mouth was a cob pipe, which he puffed in the intervals of conversation with his companion, a handsome, fair-haired, blue-eyed young fellow, very boyish in appearance, with a wonderfully pleasing countenance. They did not observe us until the creaking of the gate warned them of our approach. My friend, the drummer, had invited me to enter, with a cordiality and hospitality which was truly admirable, and I had accepted.

"How are you, Jess?" he exclaimed, extending his right hand to the man in his shirt sleeves, who accepted it with a cordial grasp.

"And you, Phil?" extending his left to the younger man, who answered:



"Pretty well, I thank you," graciously smiling.

"Here is a friend I picked up on the stage," looking at me inquiringly for the name.

"Conway," I supplemented.

This was my introduction, which they both acknowledged, shaking hands.

"I noticed as I came along that the store door was open, Jess, and nobody inside to mind it," said the drummer.

"Oh, that don't make any difference," answered Jess.

"Ain't you afraid somebody will walk in and steal something?"

"No, indeed; I've marked everything up so high that I could send anybody to the penitentiary if they stole a paper of pins."

This seemed to me a novel burglar trap, which he assured us worked like a charm.

"How's the old man?"

"He will speak for himself," answered the Captain, now coming through the open doorway, pushing back his spectacles, and straightening out the newspaper which McCluskey had brought. He extended to us each a hand.


"I have just been reading here what these rascals are doing to defeat the bill which will

come up before the legislature next winter, for the improvement of the Kentucky River. But they can't do it. No, sir; not as long as I am able to be there, and raise my voice for it. Why, I've lived on the bank of this river, man and boy, for nigh onto fifty years, and I know just what it needs, just what can be done—and what the Kentucky River trade is worth."

He was a tall, powerful man, fully six feet high, muscular and broad-shouldered, with no flesh to spare on his bones. He had a keen eye, honest and steady, and was no doubt an earnest thinker. A typical Kentuckian of the old pioneer class, fast passing away. He had no college learning, but he had all the education necessary, with his clear head and keen judgment.

"Come in, come in, gentlemen! Bess, you sassy nigger, why don't you bring out some chairs for the gentlemen?" This to a negro girl, who had been hanging about the doorway.

"Sit down, Phil, sit down," to the fair-haired young fellow who was moving away toward the gate with Jess. "Phil's down here for a spell, seeing about getting up a district school, at the landing. He's thinking about



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trying to teach the young idea how to shoot. I say, Phil, you could teach them more about shooting with a rifle, eh? ”

“ I shouldn’t wonder if I could, Captain,” in a boyish voice, laughing good-naturedly as he turned away.

“ Now you wouldn’t think to look at that boy that he fought all through the war with Morgan, would you? ”

“ Impossible! ” I answered, looking at the beardless youth, who had scarce reached his majority. No wonder the Southern troops made so brave a showing when even boys like that had shouldered arms.

VII

THE PROFESSOR, THE SHAKERS, HARRODSTOWN

McCLUSKEY's bugle now gave warning that the stage, with fresh horses attached, was waiting to begin the slow, toilsome journey up the cliff.

Bidding the Captain a cheery good-by, we followed the road to the barn, where we found everything ready for our departure, the horses seemingly eager for the start.

When all was ready I took my seat beside the driver, while the Drummer and the young man whom he had dubbed "the Professor," took their seats behind us, the latter having decided to cast his lot with us for the remainder of the journey.

"Plenty of scenery here," remarked McCluskey, pointing to the left and back of us with his whip, where everything seemed a bewildering magnificent chaos of rocks, and trees, and vines, and mist, out of which the great stone palisades, grand in their severe beauty, were visible in every direction.

To this remark I gave ready assent, looking longingly back at the road over which we had journeyed in the morning, while making our descent into the vast chasm, striving, if possible, to locate the exact spot where 'Lisbeth and I had come near death together, but the blue mists rising from the river concealed the road from view.

Reluctantly, after a last lingering look, such as one gives to the scene of departed joys, I set my eyes steadily forward, resolved to face the inevitable, as it really seemed to be, not as it might have been, for Jack's words—and his last look—in entrusting 'Lisbeth to my care, now seemed to force themselves upon me with stern insistence.

"That seemed to me a very close call," I said to the driver, indicating by a jerk of my head backward the little episode on the cliff, forgetting that his mind might not be so filled with the incident as mine. He understood, however, and answered promptly, shaking his head slowly as he spoke.

"A leetle nigher than I'd keer to have happen to me agin. That big rock must have slid down not long before we come along. If we'd

been a little more top heavy, nothing could have kep us from goin' over."

"We have reason to be thankful that we were not there when it fell."

McCluskey assented, and touching up his horses, we soon left the everlasting stones behind us, and entered a strip of country not essentially different from that which we had left on the other side of the river. Every vestige of the volcanic period disappeared, and I found myself again in the famous blue grass lands, wheeling along rapidly through rolling pastures and meadows besprent with wild flowers of every hue; each little rill babbling along through beds of pink and white and blue larkspur, over which white-winged butterflies hovered in countless numbers.

Sometimes the road was skirted with sugar maples, their large serrated leaves forming a most agreeable screen from the afternoon sun. Here and there a tulip tree with its unique and beautiful pink flowers, might be singled out from its neighbors; and stately rows of Lombardy poplars often defined the long avenues leading to the country homes. Hickory, maple, ash, walnut and elm all

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blended their graceful foliage in rich, harmonious tints of green, restful to the eye.

Behind us, the Drummer and his companion beguiled the time with stories of the war and the road, to which I paid little heed, for my mind was already fully occupied.

After a few miles travel, we passed through Shakertown, a strange little settlement, quiet as a churchyard. Its large brick or stone houses were set back on their lawns, with their fruitful orchards for a background.

We stopped here only long enough to deliver the mail, and had a glimpse at a group of the Shakers, gathered upon the smooth-shaven grass to watch the passing of the stage, a charming picture well worthy of preservation.

Four sweet-faced hooded "sisters," with spotless white kerchiefs folded primly across their breasts, hearing McCluskey's bugle call as he entered the village, had answered by coming down close to the gate to see the passing coach. Some of them had youthful, pretty faces, framed in soft white muslin caps, almost hidden away in their long straw hoods, not unlike tunnels.

With a smile for McCluskey, which also included the Drummer and the Professor, per-



Shakertown



haps, they watched us drive away and sweep around the skirt of the road. Before we had disappeared entirely from view, I saw them pacing slowly back to their tasks in the orchard, discoursing perhaps on the follies and wickedness of that outer world of which they obtained only such fleeting glimpses.

"Some nice little romances here no doubt?" I asked.

"A few," answered McCluskey.

"Now and then 'the world,' as they call everybody outside of this little community, will hear that some fine young fellow has looked too long and ardently down those tunnels, called hoods, into a captivating young face," remarked the Drummer, who, as usual, was well informed on this as on all other subjects.

"And then?" I asked, more than usually interested just now, in so tender an affair.

"'Store clothes' are smuggled in—for they weave and make their own garments of peculiar cut, and some fine moonlight night there is an elopement. This happens very seldom, however."

Crossing a brawling little brook which divides the Shakers from "the world," the pike now wound through the richest and most at-

tractive farm lands in that region, and hidden away among the trees, we could now and then see a stately home.

"We are coming to 'Shawnee Springs,'" said the driver, pointing with his whip away off to the right. "There's two thousand acres in this tract that they've had ever since Indian times."

Here and there I could see in the distance dense cane brakes, which still disputed possession of the fertile soil with the greedy plow-share of civilization; and seemingly trackless forests were interspersed with the fields and smooth pasture lands which had been cleared by the lordly owners of these vast homesteads.

"Four brothers, officers of the Revolution, took up these lands with their scrip, the only payment ever received by many gallant soldiers of the war for independence, and added to it other tracts by purchase. They were among the first to come to the wilderness of Kentucky, and had pick and choice," said the Professor. "One of them built right over there," pointing to the right. "The finest house in Transylvania, as Kentucky was then called. It was modeled, they said, after the

old ancestral home in England, with its great banqueting hall, and conservatories, and gardens, and park full of game, elk, and deer, and buffalo. It was for many years the show place of Kentucky."

"They are part Claiborne, I believe?" queried the Drummer.

The Professor nodded his head. Of course I pricked up my ears, and began at once to take a special and definite interest in Shawnee Springs.

"By the way, did you find Colonel Claiborne at Cogar's?" asked the Drummer.

"Yes. He was there to meet his daughter, an awfully pretty girl, they tell me. I'm sorry I couldn't wait to see her."

"Just as well, I reckon, for you'd have fallen dead in love with her on sight. Everybody does. She has got the whole of this part of the bluegrass country in a swing."

"So I hear. As I don't care about being knocked down, I'll just keep out of the way."

"That is, unless you get in and swing with her."

"Exactly."

"I'll tell you who I saw in Lexington with her—Jack Burton."

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"Jack Burton? Poor old Jack. She'll lead him a chase."

"She can't hurt him. His heart is like a rubber ball."

"I don't know about that, Nate; it'll hurt mighty bad while it's being squeezed."

"Perhaps. He's a cousin, you know. And I have heard that they are engaged."

This from the Drummer, who as I remarked, seemed to be so very well informed. I confessed my heart began to beat a little faster.

"I can hardly believe that," answered the Professor. "A cousin has so many sweet privileges, you know, that people are liable to make mistakes. I was in the same company with Jack in the army, and I know that he is one of the best, the bravest fellows in the world, but I don't think he is the kind of a man that kind of a woman would fall in love with."

"My boy—you are young yet. You don't know anything about women, and least of all, what kind of a man a maid will marry. Besides, it's just possible that in this case, the Colonel will take a hand. She is the apple of his eye. She dotes on her father, and he is very fond and proud of Jack. That's the talk."

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"Because Jack was with Morgan! I don't believe that the Colonel has ever found out yet that the South was whipped. He's got the blood in him of his far-away grandsire, William Claiborne, who kept the king and Lord Baltimore and the colonies all busy, about two hundred and fifty years ago."

"Here's a young man that rode over the cliffs on top of the stage with the Bluegrass Belle this morning and he hasn't said a word: hasn't opened his head," said the Drummer.

I think maybe he winked at the Professor. I am sure that McCluskey gave me a wink from his left eye, though I did not catch him in the act.

"Are you speaking of me?" I asked with some little confusion.

"This is no class meeting. We'll excuse you if you are not ready for confession," answered the Drummer.

"If you rode over the cliffs with her," remarked the Professor, in his fine boyish voice, "you'll be like all of the rest, determination of 'Lisbeth to the heart. It's not a dangerous malady. You'll get over it. They all do."

"Dangerous? Why, don't you know that

more matches have been made driving over the cliffs, or at picnics around the towers than anywhere else, unless it is Niagara Falls. There must be something in the mists, or the air, or the flowers and ferns, or the danger, or the solitude, or the awe-inspiring grandeur, that

“Lead young souls to dream of heaven
And bliss without alloy,”

chimed in the Professor.

“McCluskey can vouch for that,” pursued the Drummer.

“That’s so,” answered McCluskey, nudging me with his elbow, though he made believe he was manipulating the reins.

Then, perhaps to relieve my embarrassment, he continued: “This gate leads into the avenue of ‘Shawnee Springs.’ They say it’s a mile long, and the park’s got five hundred acres in it. Phil here can tell you all about it. He’s hunted in it many a time, I expect?”

“Many a time. I killed a bear there once, but that is a long story. Right over there by the Shawnee Spring, for which the place is named, Jim Ray killed a big Indian, and it was from there that he made his wonderful



Shawnee Springs

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run to Harrod's Fort, distancing the fleet Indians in pursuit."

The Drummer, likewise the Professor, proved good entertainers during the remaining four miles of our journey; so deeply interested was I in their thrilling adventures, declared free from all embellishment, that I was surprised to find when emerging from one of the densely-wooded valleys, that the sun had retired already behind a bank of clouds tinged with yellow, and was drawing after him, from every quarter, great cordons of gold, converging to the point of his setting.

"We will have rain to-morrow," said the driver, pointing to the west, then gathered up the reins more closely in order to hold the horses well in hand as we descended the hill.

We had the long summer twilight in which to finish our journey, and the horses, responsive to a gentle touch of the whip, trotted easily along a low strip of land, odorous with the scent of new-mown hay spread out to dry; then climbed slowly another slight hill, where I saw, nestling in a valley before us, a picturesque little village, Harrodstown.

Away to the right, upon a small knoll, I could discover the City of the Dead, the white

marble tombstones and tall shafts showing distinctly amid the green foliage. Then turning a curve in the road, we entered one of the principal streets of the town.

Pretty vine-wreathed cottages of modern date stood side by side with old-fashioned homesteads on either side of the street, and the air was filled with the dew-distilled odors of thousands of flowers; the most delicate tea roses, jasmine, honeysuckle, all the sweet flowers of the South it seemed, were growing in the gardens or overrunning the trellises and piazzas, yielding their combined fragrance to the twilight air.

In light, airy garments, the ladies swung to and fro in their rockers upon the porches; the children, bright of eyes and merry as the crickets that were beginning to chirp in the grass, swung on the gates, while the men leaned over the fences to talk to their neighbors, all of them "watching the stage come in." With a deep breath of enjoyment I took in the whole charming picture, uttering never a word.

"Whah you goin' to stop?" at length queried the driver. "There's Peters'es Tavern and Mis' Peggy's."

"Peters's by all means," I answered, "for I judge there must be a man at the head."

"I dunno 'bout that. Thar's a man at both, but the women does the bossing at both places. Miss Peggy's is a mighty nice, quiet place," he added, in rather an insinuating tone of voice.

I rather thought I would like it, but the Drummer thought otherwise. Remembering his wonderful versatility, and great familiarity with all subjects broached, I yielded, and consented to stop at "Peters'es," the historic old hostelry, situated on the main street of the little village.

Down "Lexington Avenue," as the entering street was called, we rattled in fine style, the horses plunging as eagerly forward as if fresh put to harness. McCluskey had walked them up the hill, making ready for this grand entrance, accompanied by a masterful winding of the horn.

A moment later we were rounding the corner into the main street, and drawing up before the entrance to the hotel.

All at once there was a commotion on the pavement, and just as the Drummer was descending from the stage, a pistol was fired

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near by, the ball piercing the tail of his long linen duster.

Without a word he climbed back to his seat, and McCluskey, taking advantage of his opportunity, was whirling us around the corner into a quiet shady back street, facing the court house square.

"Now, thar's Mis' Peggy's," said McCluskey, pointing ahead to a row of old-fashioned buildings which occupied the square facing the "Court Yard."

"You will stop with me here," I asked of the Drummer, smiling at his little adventure.

"Not me, indeed! I am going on to the next town. Two years ago I came to this little burg for the first time, and barely escaped with my life. I had a button shot off my vest. Last year I tried it again, and was not on the street an hour before I got a shot through my hat, and now? You see for yourself," ruefully holding out the skirt of his coat. "Ain't that straight goods, McCluskey?"

"I'm blamed if it ain't."

"I know," he continued, "when I've got enough. I pass this little town up. I fear a long sojourn here would not be good for my health."

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"Thar's Mis' Peggy's Bachelors," announced McCluskey.

In front of the hotel was a large locust tree, and circled around it were half a dozen men, their chairs tilted back and held at the proper angle by their feet, which were perched against the trunk, their legs looking for all the world like the spokes of a wheel, of which the tree was the hub.

"An' thar's Mis' Peggy," said McCluskey.

In the doorway of the end house stood "Mis' Peggy," a tall, comely matron, for I found that the man of the house was her other half, despite the fact that she was universally called "Mis' Peggy."

The quiet street, the general surroundings, "Mis' Peggy"—all pleased me.

"Stop here," I said, and with a commanding flourish we drew up at the main door of the hostelry, where I was soon deposited, along with several other passengers, for this seemed a popular inn.

The Drummer did not change his mind, McCluskey cracked his whip and the last I saw of him he was dashing around the corner towards the stable, to be transferred to the coach for the next town.

Supper was in progress, and after the long ride we were able to do full justice to the delicious viands set before us, all of them smoking hot.

After the meal, to stretch my legs, I strolled for an hour through the deserted streets, then returning to the inn I seated myself upon the steps and fell to watching the shadows made by the light of the quarter moon sifting through the locust trees, which were grouped in the court yard opposite. Fleecy clouds were drifting rapidly across the sky, and a fresh breeze had sprung up since sundown.

"I believe we will have rain," I said to the driver, who passed that way, "and they need it badly enough, I suppose, from the complaints made by the farmers whom we met on the road to-day."

"You can't tell nothin' by what the farmers say. You can't satisfy them. It's allers too hot or too cold, too wet or too dry. The crops is everlastin'ly threaten'd with destruction from one thing or 'nother," answered he, stopping for a moment on the steps.

"Why, they seemed to me a pretty jolly lot," said I.

"Why not? They know if the crops is

short they'll get big prices for their stuff. The only thing that bothers them is, they may have to pay more for their whisky." So saying he moved on.

The circle of bachelors about the tree was still unbroken. From their talk and laughter I judged they were cracking a precious lot of jokes.

One of them, a retired judge, was thinking of deserting the ranks, so McCluskey told me, contemplating matrimony. Oh, wise judge!

He seemed to be with them, but not of them, for he had little to say. He sat with his cane pressed to his lips, his eyes fastened upon the lighted window of a little cottage on the next corner, and did not seem to be sharing the merriment of his fellows. His thoughts were evidently far afield, as were mine not long after.

I lost sight of the bon comrades circled around the tree, and in their stead, saw only the fair companion of my journey over the cliffs—only the sweet girl, who had rested for a few brief moments of danger in my arms, close pressed to my heart, while we faced together, it seemed, certain death.

I almost wished it had come then, since it

must come to everybody sooner or later. I was in love.

"Surely, surely," I kept saying to myself, "it could have been no chance, no mischance, which brought us two together to-day in a manner so unforeseen. It must have been Providence, and the meeting for time, and all eternity."

I could almost feel again her head upon my shoulder, and the wild beating of her heart against mine.

Only for a few minutes did this madness last, for, across my mind began to drift snatches of the conversation heard upon the stage, that—that possibly she and Jack might be, some day, closer than friends, or even cousins.

"Let me look this fact, for such it is no doubt, squarely in the face," I mused, leaning heavily upon my cane, planted firmly in front of me, as is the habit of men in deep thought.

Wrenching myself from the spell of her nearness, the dreamy look of her downcast eyes, her sweet-toned voice, with its soft Southern accent, I began to realize how near I had come to forgetting my loyalty to my friend

—to Jack, who had trusted her to my care for only a few short hours, a few short miles of travel; perilously near to saying words which had never come into my heart before to say to any other woman; words which, if once said, could never be unsaid,—or forgotten, if poured into willing ears.

A tingling flush came into my cheek at this thought; shame that I had for a moment attributed her gentleness, her tender glances, her soft speeches to anything save the unstrung condition of her nerves in a critical moment of danger. Certainly this could have been no sudden unfolding of her heart to me, almost a stranger.

Long I sat there thinking while the summer twilight deepened and the soft-footed night stole noiselessly over the sky, marshaling upon the dark blue field her nightly parade of silver stars, driving the pale moon before them.

The incidents of the day had robbed me of my habitual calmness and self-control, but I made a mighty effort to recover myself, and so school my heart that neither she nor Jack would ever discover how narrowly I had escaped a worse danger, perhaps, than that which

threatened us on the cliffs, disloyalty to my friend who trusted me.

I lifted my eyes to the heavens, to register, maybe, some oath of fealty to them both, to swear by the eternal stars—but alas—between me and their heavenly truthful orbs was thrust the human beauty of her lovelit eyes, which deepened at the sight of mine in the one moment in which I looked into her soul.

“Chance may bring us together again, but it shall never be of my making,” I resolved.

Then, with the inconsistency of love, I remembered that the whole galaxy of the heavens was then looking down upon her also, and rejoiced to think that the same soft moonlight that fell upon me, was, perhaps, at that moment enfolding her like a garment and, perchance, at that very moment, she might be thinking also of me.

“Is there really such a thing in this world as telepathy; a transference of thought through space?”

Seeing then that the circle of bachelors had broken, and they were all dispersing, I betook myself to my own bed, listening meanwhile to a caged mockingbird hanging at my neighbor's window, singing his love song in the

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moonlight to his mate far away in the woodland.

"If Love were a bird I would borrow his voice
And, singing with notes of gold,
Would carry his message, passing sweet,
To the hearts of the young and the old.
And the tones of my song should be borne along
Like the chiming of bells afar;
And my voice should be heard like a lonely bird
Or the gleam of a falling star."

VIII

MIS' PEGGY—UNCLE DAW

MISS PEGGY had given me her best room, the one in the northeast corner, over the parlor, facing the courtyard, and in the shadow of the tall steeple of St. Peter's, the pretty little Gothic church, which hobnobbed with the engine house over the way.

The furniture was plain, but everything was scrupulously neat, and the bed so comfortable that I would have needed no rocking to put me to sleep.

Nevertheless I had it, for the stagecoach had so impressed me with its motion that I was no sooner in bed than I began to feel the pendulous swinging of the coach, backward and forward, backward and forward, until with a downward plunge I seemed to fall from the topmost cliff of Kentucky River into a profound sleep, from which I was awakened, it seemed to me, only a few seconds later by a rattling of chains and a mysterious, muffled conversation beneath my window.

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The deep stillness of the night seemed to emphasize every little sound. For some time I struggled with my drowsiness, until a distinct command "to kill" something or somebody reached my ears. I thought at first that I was still dreaming of the Professor's stories of adventure as related to us; but, still hearing the mysterious sounds beneath my window, I determined to investigate.

Crossing the floor noiselessly, I reached the window, and pulling aside the blind, I found it later than I thought. The gray dawn was already struggling with the darkness.

Opening the shutter cautiously, I peered over the ledge. There in the alley, or gateway leading to the rear of the house, stood a rickety old farm wagon filled with "truck"—vegetables, milk, butter, eggs, and fruit—while standing beside it was a very black negro, bent and grizzled with age. He was proceeding to carry out his instructions "to kill," by wringing off the heads of a dozen or more spring chickens, which he had just taken from the cart.

Miss Peggy stood by, with some sort of sack thrown over her bed gown, and her feet

thrust into a pair of rubber shoes—her husband's, I should say. Over her head she was holding a dripping umbrella, for a drizzling rain had set in. She was interrogating the negro sharply.

"Why in the name of common sense, didn't you bring these things here last night, like you oughter, instead of coming here at this hour to wake people up? And Sunday morning too, and you pretendin' to be a Christian nigger!"

"Kase, Mis' Peggy, it wur *onpossibel!*" He spoke slowly, shaking his head as if a little palsied. He did not look up, but continued his murderous work.

"Do you ever expect to get forgiveness for it? I'd like to know that," asked mine hostess.

"Yes, marm, I kalkerlates dat de good Lawd, what sees and knows ebery ting, at de las' day will know jes zackly how this heyer wuz, an' he'll furgive 'Ole George.' Dat's what I 'pen's on, Mis' Peggy."

"A body couldn't expect anything better from an old hardshell Baptist that thinks he can jump into a river or a pond any time and wash his sins away," said Miss Peggy.

Now George felt called upon to defend his orthodoxy. So while Miss Peggy raised the wings and felt of the chickens to see if they were fat, he gave his head a little preparatory shake, cleared his throat and began:

"You see, Mis' Peggy, dere's wu'ks o' marcy, an' wu'ks o' grace, an' wu'ks o' need-sessity whut mus' be done. De good Lawd sez so hisself somewhar 'twixt de leds o' his blessed book. I don' rightly know jes' whar, an' he kalkerlates on dat."

"And which is it, I'd like to know, when a lazy nigger don't get through his work on Saturday night, and has to finish up on Sunday?"

"It am bofe; Mistiss, it am bofe. Ef I had n'a got up yerly dis heyer mawnin, an' gethered an' fotched you dis heyer guardin' truck, an' dese heyer fine pullits inter you, whar would your dinner a bin? An' ef you had n'a had enny dinner, Sundry or no Sundry, whar would yer po' bo'ders 'a bin?"

I was most favorably impressed with this argument.

"Dese yer po', half-starved critters wot kums in ebery Sat'dy night to fill up on one uv Mis' Peggy's Sundry dinners? Dese yer

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music men what plays de drum on de road six days in de week, an' jes' lays in wait for Mis' Peggy's good dinner on de Sabbuth, whar would dey 'a bin? Ain't dat a wu'k o' marcy?"

I declare, the old fellow was quite a diplomat. In behalf of the "drummers" I longed to reach down and grasp his honest hand. Miss Peggy, however, only shook her head, saying: "That's what I call 'a whipping the devil around the stump.'"

"Den ef it hain't a wu'k uv marcy, nur need-sessity, Mis' Peggy, whut makes yer buys 'em frum me dis mawnin? Not as I'm gwine ter 'low yer to pay me fur 'em dis mawnin; no, money can't change han's dis yer blessid Lawd's day mawnin; you kin jes' owe it ter me tell ter-morrow, when you pay fur de odder tings wot I will fotch in, but what mak's yer buy 'em ter-day, Mis' Peggy?"

"Just because you didn't bring them yester-day as I told you, and I'm obliged to have them!"

"Jes' zactly, I tole you so. Needsessity!" (wringing the neck of the last chicken). "Jes' heft dat pullit, Mis' Peggy. I 'clar ter gracious, hit's wurf more'n a bit."

Miss Peggy carefully "hefted" the chicken and shook her head.

"I ain't going to give more than a bit for it."

"Well, I dun wring hit's naick now, an' hit'll hev ter go fur a bit."

Having finished his task, he changed his heavy weight from one foot to the other, and spread out his horny hands to explain why he had not come on Saturday. Casting his eyes up, for the first time, I saw that one was sightless, and that his features were rugged, and not so pleasing as one might have supposed from the amiable trend of his argument.

"Yer see, Mis' Peggy, hit's jes' dis a way. Hit's bin so dry dese t'ree weeks dat I could'n' get my turnip patch in no way, an' I wur jes' a-waitin' fur dis heyer bery time."

"Go 'long, Daw, you didn't know yesterday it was going to rain any more than I did."

"Oh, yes, Mistiss, I did. I knowed it wuz gwine ter rain for sho," he answered earnestly.

"You see, as I wuz a-walkin' along t'rough de woods—Marse Willyum's woods, on de yudder side o' de pike from me—'bout dinner time, thinkin' 'bout my turnip patch, all to

onc't a dead lim' fell off'n a tree, right at my feet. 'Hi yi!' sez I to myself, 'Hi yi! dis heyer looks moutly like rain'; an' I looked up, but I didn' see narry a cloud.

"An' den, in 'bout a nudder minit, I heyer'd de tree to'd holler, rite ober my hed. An' I looked up agin, an' narry a cloud, not so big as a man's han'," (catching hold of his wrist and spreading out the aforementioned hand)

"Den purty soon I heyer'd de rain crow cawin' in de tree-top, an' 'fore I git home, please Gawd, I heyer de steam kyar way ober dah fifteen mile away, a whistlin, an' a rattlin' 'shicky ricky shick shack:' jes' like it wur right ober de fence in Marse Willyum's cawn-fiel' mind yer, an' yit dar wuz narry a cloud.

"But I wen' straight home, an' sez I to my ole ooman, sez I, 'Clar'sy, hit's a gwineter rain.' She larfed at me, an' she sez to me, sez she:

"'G'long, ole man, you's in yer secon' foolishness, don' you see dah ain't narry a cloud?

"'I don' keer,' sez I to Clar'sy, sez I, 'hit's a gwineter rain'; an', Mis' Peggy, I wuz jis so satisfied in my own min' dat I let all holt go, me and Clar'sy, an' wen' to wu'k in my turnip patch; an' me an' de ole ooman wu'kec

in it till ten o'clock by de light o' de moon, for Clar'sy is a oncommon good ooman, ef I do say it myself; an' when she see me in earnes' she hoped me pow'rful, specially arter she seed herself de sun go down, an' hit a drawin' water. She sez to me den, sez she:

"'Ole man, 'fore de Lawd, I b'lieves yer right. Hit tiz gwineter rain.'"

With this he shifted his quid of tobacco from one side of his mouth to the other, and proceeded to fill his arms with the vegetables. Evidently he felt that he had the best of the argument, for he was emboldened to say further:

"Now, ef I had n'a planted dat turnip patch, what would yer a done nex' winter, when yer bo'ders begin ter axes fur greens wid deir bakin'? De good Lawd He knows as how you wuz a dependin' on dat ber'y turnip patch for yo' winter greens."

"Stuff!" answered Miss Peggy, turning about to enter the house.

George continued to unload his cart, while the rain pattered down, filling the brim of his old wool hat, and running off in a little stream through a nick in the edge. He did not seem to mind it. Once in a while he would wipe off

his face with his shirt sleeves, but he kept on unloading his cart, singing, meanwhile, in a low key as he went and came:

“De good Lawd, he ’livered ole Danyel,
Ole Danyel, ole Danyel;
De good Lawd, he ’livered ole Danyel,
’Livered him from de fiery flames.”

Miss Peggy disappeared inside, and I crept back to my bed and to sleep. Morpheus was good to me and sent no such dreams as had tormented me waking, but instead, a sound, sweet second nap, from which I would not have wakened, perhaps, until that good “Sunday dinner” was ready, if I had not been aroused by a terrific din in the hall, giving me and all other laggards warning that it was time to bestir ourselves.

With regretful longing for a little more slumber, I arose and proceeded to dress, surveying myself by sections in the small glass which hung on the wall; then, pulling aside my white dimity blind, I found that the drizzling shower which had accompanied Miss Peggy’s interview with “Uncle Daw,” as I found afterwards he was called by all of the inhabitants, had settled down into a heavy, steady,

uncompromising rain, the very thing for the turnip patch, no doubt, but a dreary prospect for me.

A renewal of the din that had awakened me startled me from my contemplation of the discouraging prospect without.

It was the gong for breakfast, beaten with frantic energy by a negro boy who had planted himself in the front door, directly beneath my window, where he continued for several minutes to beat the devil's own tattoo upon it, while conversing with a crony upon the sidewalk.

"Surely he expects to bring the whole town in to breakfast," I thought, as I descended the stairway; "and will succeed if his energy in beating that gong counts for anything."

Curled up at his feet were two dogs, wet and smelling of the dampness outside. They looked up at the gong in a most deprecating manner. One of them, the larger of the two, arose and stuck his sharp nose outside the door as if half-minded to go back into the rain to escape the gong; but repenting, crept around the boy, rubbed his nose against his legs and curled himself up again at his feet.

Upon a back gallery, shaded by an im-

penetrable mass of syringas, in full view of the hall door, stood three or four disconsolate chickens with drooping feathers, into which they had managed to sink their necks till they looked almost as if they belonged to the headless lot delivered by George. They were seeking shelter from the rain, but in vain, for a maid with a broom made a rush for them, exclaiming:

“I nebber see de like fur imperence. I ’spoze you be in de parlur naix.”

The boy finally disappeared with his infernal machine, and I took his place upon the doorstep, half expecting to see the jolly bachelors still circled around the tree.

They were gone, but in their stead were a dozen or more riotous ducks, paddling up and down in the swift little current formed in the gutter by the overflow from the down-spout upon the pavement.

Their backs were as sleek and glossy as if never a drop of rain had fallen upon them. They seemed heartily delighted with the rain, and gabbled noisily as they plunged their heads under the water and essayed to swim in the shallow stream.

“You’d better kum in ter yer breakfas’

while de waffles is hot and de fried chicken is a sizzlin'."

I looked around; he of the gong was at my elbow, with a smile most suggestive of an itching palm. Slipping a quarter into his hand I followed him into the long, breezy dining-room.

IX

THE OFFICE—A RAINY SUNDAY—STORIES OF
THE GUN

AFTER Miss Peggy's good Sunday morning breakfast, I turned into the office, wondering if there really was a man at the helm.

I found that there was. He was not called "Mr. Peggy," but he was quite as efficient in his sphere as "Miss Peggy" in hers.

I found him behind "the bar," dispensing morning toddies to a lot of old regulars who sauntered in out of the rain, and removing from their cheeks their quids of tobacco, made straight for the bar.

The tender did not need to ask what they wanted; he knew them all like a book, and mixed their drinks accordingly.

The Bachelors—spelled with a big "B"—for they were one of the chief features of the town, were all in the office, their feet propped up on the window sills, in lieu of the tree outside.

The sentimental "Judge," not being able

to see his lady's bower without risking a wetting, made impatient trips to the door to look out, the others winking at each other, knowingly. I observed that the gold-headed cane, ordinarily used as a seal upon his lips, while sitting, was not solely for ornament, since he leaned heavily upon it as he walked.

I said they were all there. They were not, for as I passed through the hall, I saw one of them, "Gentleman George," as everybody called him, dressed in an immaculate white linen suit, harmonizing well with his fresh complexion and white hair, gossiping with Mis' Peggy, who with a great housekeeper's apron tied over her Sunday gown, was busy shelling peas for dinner, while close beside her sat a great basket of fresh strawberries which must be capped before she could set out for church; for Mis' Peggy allowed nothing to keep her from her chosen place of worship, only a few steps away, at the next corner.

Mis' Peggy's other half—she being the better half, of course—a small, wiry, sunbrowned man, looked inquiringly at me as I entered "the office."

Assuming therefore the air of one really "to the manor born," I stepped up to the bar,

and ordered a julep, such as was described by "Jeems," the teamster, the day before.

There was the mint, fresh from old "Daw's" garden, no doubt, and I must do the mixer justice to say that he certainly mixed a very fine julep, if I might be called a judge (?).

"The Bachelors," two of whom I afterwards found to be, in fact, widowers, courteously made room for me beside them, offering the hospitality of the sill for my feet, which I accepted, and listened with much interest to their political and religious discussions, varied with not a few reminiscences of "war times."

The bells now with one accord began sending forth their solemn peals of invitation to church, no half-hearted notes, but strong and loud and clear, smiting the Sunday silence with no uncertain sound, penetrating to even the remotest corners of the little village upon which had fallen that peculiar restfulness, that freedom from bustle and turmoil which so strongly accentuates the quiet of a Sunday morning in a country town.

The notes of warning from Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Episcopal, and all other Christian bells had scarcely died away before

the streets were thronged with people, wending their way to the houses of their faith.

Comfortable fathers and mothers of family, broad of back, having grown fat together from good living in this well-favored land, walked arm-in-arm under dripping umbrellas. Young women in crisp, pretty summer gowns, fast losing their crispness in the damp atmosphere, picked their way carefully, mindful of the pitfalls for unwary feet, daintily shod. Village beaux, not forgetful of the delightful intimacy favored by an umbrella, slowly, very slowly, wended their way churchward, each close-joined to the village maid whom he had invited to share this sweet intimacy.

They all talked soberly as they walked, the girls and beaux "chatting," but in a subdued key, mindful that it was Sunday, and they were going to church.

The bells now ceased their calling and the stream of people had ceased its steady flow into the time-honored walls. Only a few loiterers were left outside, and they dropped into "The Office."

From one of these, I heard for the first time the particulars of the little episode of the evening before, which had so summarily de-

prived me of the companionship of my friend, the Drummer.

In response to my mention of the pistol shot and the Drummer's story of his several visits to the town, barely escaping each time with his life, one of the bystanders exclaimed:

"I'll be blowed if that ain't true! Don't you remember," turning to the Judge, "when Bob Gallagher shot Hanks?"

"I remember—very well. That occasion, sir," turning to me, "has furnished a by-word, or phrase you might call it, for the whole country," answered the Judge in a calm, deliberate, judicial way. Continuing the story, he said:

"We had living here about town a fellow named Gallagher, a powerful, well-built man, but a turbulent and unruly fellow, who had at different times killed several men, provoking them to attack him, then escaping punishment on the plea of self-defense.

"In his broils he was usually aided and abetted by his sons, 'chips of the old block,' and the trio was a terror to the community.

"This was just after the war, when there was a dreadful amount of lawlessness throughout the whole country, the unsettled condition

of the past few years having brought to the surface the worst characters, who worked their own will, without bar or hindrance.

"About this time Gallagher concluded he would like to be town marshal, and strange to say, the citizens concluded it might be a good move to put him in."


"Upon the homeopathic principle I suppose, '*Similia similibus curantur?*'" I asked.

"Precisely. Like cures like. They thought Bob would be able to check outlawry, and the office would be a check on Bob. He was sworn in and the scheme worked like a charm. We never had better order in town.

"Everybody was afraid of him and kept out of his way, so he never had a chance to break a head or start a fight himself.

"Finally, some fellows came up from Anderson one day, full of Anderson County whisky, and raised a disturbance. This was Gallagher's opportunity. He was 'spoiling for a fight,' as the boys would say, so he and his two sons fell upon the roughs and laid about them pretty lively with their clubs.

"The Anderson boys were game, and showed fight, whereupon Gallagher pulled his gun and threatened to shoot.



"Quick as a flash the Anderson man pulled his gun and snapped it so close to Gallagher that the powder singed his shirt, shouting as he shot, 'Let 'er go, Gallagher.'

"Gallagher did 'let 'er go,' and his shot killed Hanks instantly."

"And he was acquitted?"

"Of course. Hanks attempted to fire the first shot, resisting an officer of the law."

"That," interrupted the bystander, "was the first time this drummer made his appearance in town, and a stray shot from one of the Gallagher boys in the excitement nipped off one of his buttons."

"Do you remember the incidents of his second escape?" I asked.

"Yes, it was about a year later that he was passing through here again, and Gallagher was done for that time.

"Zach Henry, a poor crippled saloonkeeper that hobbled about on crutches, got a present of a good fat 'possum, and he giv' a 'possum supper at 'Aunt Rhody's,' an old colored woman who could get up the *best* 'possum supper you ever saw.

"Well, he asked all the boys exceptin' Gallaghers. So in the middle of the supper,

in walked Gallagher, as an officer of the law, to break it up. Him and Henry had some words and he fell on Henry and beat him to a jelly—and him a cripple—and his boys kept the other fellows too busy to try to help Henry. The doctors thought Henry would never get well, but he pulled through and swore he would kill Gallagher on sight.

“Sure enough, the first day he was able to hobble to the door on his crutches, there was Gallagher a-comin’ down the other side of the street.

“‘Fetch me my gun quick,’ sez he to his wife, and she fetched it and he rested it on his crutch and took a good, steady aim and fired, and Gallagher dropped like a beef, filled with buckshot.

“His boys didn’t wait to look at their daddy, but ran into a sto’ close by to get a pistol.

“‘Fetch me my pistol,’ says Henry to his wife, sez he, and she had it ready for him, and he fired at young Gallagher as he was goin’ in the sto’ and he dropped. The ball had struck him in the back at a distance of sixty yards—and killed him.”

“It was a remarkable shot,” supplemented the Judge.

"And Henry?" I asked, much interested in the recital.

"Acquitted, of course. Old Phil and 'The Governor' defended him. You ought to have heard the speeches—the jury was out only ten minutes," said one of the townsmen.

"And the people! You oughter a seen the people," continued the first narrator. "They wanted Henry to throw away his crutches and let them carry him home on their shoulders.

"Well, sur, strange as you may think it, that same drummer was on the street, had just got to town, and one of them buckshot went through his hat. It did for a fact."

"You see," said the Judge, "it was a mere question of which would see the other first. Henry knew it and everybody else knew it, and the jury looked at it as purely a matter of self-defense.

"As for the people, they seemed to bestow upon Henry such gratitude as we read in olden times was accorded the knights of old, who slew the dragons.

"But, my dear sir," continued the Judge, "having heard these 'overtrue tales,' you must not misjudge us; we are a law-abiding

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people, and if you stay with us long enough you will find much to interest you.

“This is the oldest town in the State. The cradle of the West. It has been the birthplace of some of the most remarkable men and women of the century, and the theater of some historic events of great national importance.

“It was not more than a stone’s throw from here, in the old ‘Wingfield Tavern’ on Main Street, that Aaron Burr hatched his conspiracy, drawing into it so many of our leading men, unaware of the treasonable nature of his designs, that Joseph Hamilton Daviess, the United States attorney who first discovered the plot and brought him to trial at Frankfort, could not convict him for lack of these men as witnesses.

“In the clerk’s office beside it, you will find the records of Captain Lewis Robards *vs.* Rachel Donaldson, his wife, who ran away with Andrew Jackson, and thereby hangs a true story never given to the world.

“Right around the corner here lived General Adair, who with his brave Kentuckians recruited from this central blue grass region, and the Tennesseans, at the battle of New

Orleans, saved all this country west of the Alleghenies to the United States.

"In that old-fashioned brick residence on the hill, just back of us lived Colonel Thomas P. Moore, minister to South America under Jackson, the first foreign minister from the West, and his beautiful wife. You can see here some of the quaint old-fashioned silver, brought back with them from Bogota.

"General Adair lived and died right here in our midst. In his home a few rods away, was born his beautiful daughter, a woman of rare wit and culture, who when the Pope refused to her an audience, explaining through his ambassador that such favors were granted only to sovereigns, replied:

" 'Tell his Holiness that I come from a land where the men are all sovereigns and the women all queens.' The interview was granted. That was Mrs. Florida White.

"In a little red brick house, opposite Peter's Tavern, lived Rev. Jesse Head, the Methodist minister who married Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks, and in the cemetery you will find his gravestone.

"Nancy Hanks, Thomas Lincoln's wife, was well known in this community, for she was

raised in Washington County. There are people here who remember her well, and I can introduce to you some day, the only man who knows, and can vouch for the true story of Abraham Lincoln's mother.

"I cannot recall or take up your time with these old stories, for it is now about one o'clock, and Miss Peggy's gong sounds to the minute."

Sure enough, before he ceased speaking the din began, and we were filing into the dining-room.

X

"COTE DAY"—DR. POSSUM—RUBE

FOR Monday I had planned a visit to our attorney in order to confer with him about the notice which we had received concerning the ownership of the towers, the fortunate possessor of these magnificent bits of masonry being a resident of Harrodsburg.

Old Daw's arrival under my window before daybreak with his market stuffs was responsible for the change in my plans, for from him I learned it was "Cote day," and he "'lowed Mis' Peggy would be 'spectin' him yerly, to fetch in de gyardin truck, an' chicken fixins fur dinner." I knew therefore the attorney would be otherwise engaged. Daw was scarcely out of the way, and I turned over for my second nap, when I became aware of a commotion on the street, the steady tramp of things alive, men or beasts. Before I could get to the window I found it was both, for the lowing of cattle, the bleating of sheep, the cracking of whips, and hallooming of the drovers

produced a confusion sufficient to drive sleep away for that morning. I was therefore among the earliest risers, and first at the breakfast table with an appetite well sharpened for the meal.

The stream of country people had begun flowing into town before I had finished my toilet, and by the time I was through eating each paling in the court yard fence on three sides had been converted into a hitching post for saddle horses.

The live stock had been grouped in the side streets, huddled together and guarded at each end by a driver, lustily cracking his whip and shouting at the restive creatures whenever they seemed inclined to break away. They were waiting here, I was told, till the noon hour, when an auctioneer with stentorian lungs would sell them to the highest bidder.

Following the stream of men and boys with stock, who seemed to be wending their way to the old Seminary Hill, I was joined by one of the countrymen standing about the tavern, who volunteered some interesting information.

"Maybe you don't know it, but this is interestin' ground, stranger. You are standin'

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on the block of land whar the first town site was laid out west of the Alleghenies, and whar the first schoolhouse was raised.

“Right here in 1774, Captain James Harrod stopped with his men, and seeing that it was near a good spring, they pitched their principal camp here, just one hundred yards from the spring.

“Dan’l Boone and his party come along soon after and helped them lay out a town site. A good many cabins was built, and a stockade was made around it to protect them from the Indians, which were mighty bad at that time, as well as the wild beasts. Close to the fort they planted the first cornfield in the wilderness.

“What was the place then called?” I asked.

“It was first called Harrod’s fort. Some called it Harrod’s town, but there’s no mistake about its being the oldest in the State.”

“I was under the impression that Daniel Boone was the first white settler.”

“That’s true, and then again it ain’t true. Dan’l Boone and his hunters came over the mounting first. He was the first white man to set foot in the wilderness.

“Making their way through Cumberland

Gap, they found the woods full of game, and wild beasts, and Indians. They didn't keer for a little thing like that. They just pushed along over what was called afterwards the 'Wilderness Trail,' till they come to the banks of the Kentucky River. That was in 1769.

"That summer they spent in exploring this blue grass country, which they made up their minds was good enough fur them.

"When cold weather come on it caught 'em right here, in what we call Mercer County, and he spent that winter in a cave about four miles east of here on a little creek called Shawnee Run, from the Shawnee Springs whar it rises. A tree is still standing by the cave, whar he cut his name on it."

"He must have been lonesome, with no other white man this side of the mountains."

"I reckon he was, for in the spring he went back to his home in North Car'lina to bring his fambly out. And he spread such wonderful stories about this country, its grass so green that it looked blue; and its earth so black, you jist had to scratch it to raise corn; and the game—elk and deer, and wild ducks an' turkeys, and buffalo so plenty that everybody got crazy, and it wasn't long before the trail

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over the mountains was thick with movers' wagons. But this was the first settlement, though it wasn't made till five years after he fust came out."

"How was that?"

"Harrod was on the spot fust in 1764, and when Dan'l Boone got back to his old cave, I reckon he thought there was too many people here for him. You know thar's some folks as feels that way. So when he went back to North Car'lina for his family, he brought 'em out far as Clinch River, then in the summer of 1775 he built a fort at what's called Boonesborough now, and brought out his family that summer.

"So you see, it makes no difference what you've heard, these is the facts, for my daddy was born right here. That's all been settled, jest as I tell you, and in 1874 we celebrated its 100 years."

While we were talking, quite a promiscuous gathering of men and stock was crystallizing about the center of the hill. On the outer edges were farmers with their wagons of water-melons and other provender for man and beast, and countrymen, with baskets of chickens, stout twine being woven across the top to con-

fine them, swung on each side of their saddles. There were braying mules, bleating calves, bellowing bulls, and numerous yelping curs adding to the din and confusion.

"What does it all mean," I asked of the friendly countrymen.

"This is whar they do thar trading. They uster do it down 'bout the Cotehouse, but they made too much noise and commotion, an' the town bo'de made a rule that all the 'jockey-in' must be done on Seminary Hill; that little brick house over thar was the first school."

"What is the difference between jockeying and selling?"

"Well, you see, no money passes here. They just swap hosses and wagins, and whatever they've got to swap, every man tryin' to get the best of the others. Of course, the best trader gets the best of it always. That man with the chickens wants to swap his horse, and a good trader will make him throw in his chickens."

"You see that man over thar with a roll of linsey in his wagin? He wants to swap one of his horses. See, he's traded it for that sorrel horse—and by gum! Ef he ain't a throwin' in his wife's roll of linsey."

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"Hello, Si!" he called to the trader.
"You'll ketch it when you git home."

"Spec maybe I will," said the other, unhitching his horse, "but you see, I got a better nag."

"His wife sent that linsey fur him to leave at the sto' whar she does her tradin', calkerlatin to come in next week and get some boughten stuff for herself and gals.

"They live down in the Chapline hills, and don't get to town offen, and she's ben a spinning and a weavin' that linsey all winter, I'll be bound!"

The man with the watermelons seemed to be doing a thriving trade, for it was a thirsty crowd.

Thanking the countryman, I took my way down the hill.

Casting about in my own mind as to how I should spend the intervening time until dinner, my attention was attracted to the courthouse, over the way, where the crier, standing in the doorway was calling:

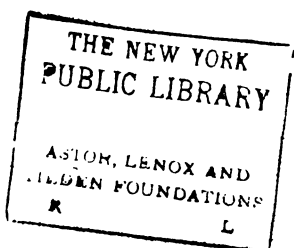
.
"O—Yez! O—Yez! O—Yez!

"Doc-tor Possum! Doc-tor Possum!

"Syl-via Taylor! Syl-via Taylor!



The Old Court House



"Reu-ben Cross-er! Reu-ben Cross-er!"

The first name attracting my attention, I concluded to go over to the hall of justice and see what was going on.

The parties so called must have been in waiting, for when I succeeded in making my way inside, I found them in place.

With my mind full of folklore, I found Dr. Possum altogether different from anything I had expected. Instead of an active, wily, wide-awake creature of some kind, I found a poor old gray-haired darky, bent with age, seemingly unconcerned about the case in hand, with which, of course, he had somewhat to do.

Reuben Cross, a typical negro, neatly dressed in blue denim; coatless, as suited the season, was already on the stand, in the hands of the attorney who had been appointed by the court to take charge of the defendant, Dr. Possum, against whom some charge had already been laid before my arrival. Reuben was the first witness for the defense.

My friend, "The Judge," was upon the bench, and in the crowd which filled the courtroom I saw a good many of my chance acquaintances.

The attorney, a young man, began the examination in the usual way, asking the witness to give his name.

"My name? Why, Marse Johnnie—What fur—what fur you axes me fur my name, when you know it—jes-as-well as I do myself. Cos you do, cause my Sylvie, she nuss you when you'se a baby."

"That's so; I know your name, but I want you to tell the court your name."

The witness looked around the room inquiringly. Then up at the ceiling, with a puzzled look upon his face; then to the attorney.

"What-wha-whar ees de cote, Marse Johnnie? I don' see nobody heyer what don' know me."

"Tell the Judge your name."

"Tell de Jedge? Tell de Jedge?" a broad grin overspreading his face. "Why—why de Jedge know my name mos' ez well ez you does. Why—why—why—my Sylvie—she washes fur de Jedge, an' I carries his cloes home eber Sat'dy night—I do. Cos' de Jedge knows my name."

"I hope the fact that you carry the Judge's clothes home won't prejudice him unduly in

this case. I hope you have always been prompt and faithful, in order that your testimony may be entitled to full credence."

"I allus has 'em dar in plenty o' time fur Sunday, don' I, Jedge?"

The Judge with difficulty suppressing a smile, bowed his head and said:

"Nevertheless you must tell your name."

With a look of wonder and amazement upon his face, he answered:

"Jest as ef everybody in deez heyer cote-house—" waving his arm with one comprehensive sweep around the room, "don' know Rube!" That was entirely past his comprehension.

"Rube what?"

"Jes' plain Rube," was the crestfallen answer.

"No last name?" asked the lawyer.

"No las' name; I ain't got none, tho' some pebles do call me Reuben Cross, 'cause dat eez de way I always writes it when I signs."

"What was your father's name?"

"Now, Marse Johnnie, what fur you axes me sich foolish questions like dat fur. How'd I knew his name? I eez jest like a rabbit throwed out in a brier patch a cole frosty

mornin'. I don't keer whar I cum frum. I jest bizzy studyin' whar I eez a gwine to."

"Well, then, tell us your mammy's name."

"My mammy's bin died too long ago to talk aboud, an' what's dis got to do wiz it ennyhow?"

"I eez a Creole nigger; frum down in Loueezean." This explained a little foreign accent and manner that I did not understand.

"Where do you live," persisted the attorney, trying to locate him somehow.

"Whah I lefe? Whah I lefe? Why, eber body knows jes' 'zactly whah I lefe, 'cause I lefe in de berry same house, down thar on the crick, close to de black Baptis' church whar I lefe eber since I come here, arter de war wid Sylvie. You see, I wuz a Creole nigger, I wuz, and when de wah broke out, down thar in Meesseesip, close to N' Orleans, I wen' wid my ole Marster to kinder take keer uv him. Bof de boys bein' dun keel, my ole Mees sent me wid him; and he wuz allus in de thickest' uv de fightin', till one day—one day my ole massr—he—he fell offen his hoss, shot thro' de side." He paused for a moment, for his voice was quivering. "Well, I peek him up an'

manage to get him back under a tree, whah he die layin' right here in my arm, an' wid his last bref—prit' near—he say to me: 'Rube, go back and take keer uv ole Mees. You's 'bout all she got left.'

"Well, I wen' back. Ole Mees knowed it, 'fore I come, an' I could see her heart was broke. Den de Yaller Jack come along, an' eberybody wuz skeered to def, and my ole Mees wuz 'mong de fust to go down wid de fever, 'cause she didn't have no heart to stan' up agin it; an' she say she didn't keer nohow; 'cause she didn't have nuthin' to leefe fur ennyhow.

"Well—eberybody wuz skeered to cum nigh her. So I jes' nussed her myself like she wuz a baby, an' when she die, I dug a grave fur her wid dese heyer han's, an' bury her.

"Arter a while, when de fever wasn't so bad, I wen' to N' Orleans to sell my leetle cotton crop—fur ole Mees had give me a leetle place on de bayou, an' I had my own leetle boat, an' while I wuz down thar, I come acrost my Sylvie what wuz stayin' thar wid her young Madam frum Kaintuck—an'—an' de upshot uv it all wuz we got married, an' we lived dah

fur awhile at my little place by Ocean Spring, me boating lumber in de summer, an' oyster feeshin' in de winter.

"But she wuzzent satisfied, Marse Johnnie, as you know. Arter her young Madam went away she want to geet back to Mees M'rier an' de chillen what she nussed. She wuzzent satisfied, so I brung her back to her ole Kaintuck home, an' so here we is, and bin here eight year—most—till eberybody knows Rube, as well as if I eez born here."

"How do you make your living?"

"Me? Oh, I kin make a livin' anywhah, by jes' makin' myself useful to eberbody. I wuke fur Mees Peggy—an' I cleans out sto's, an' I chops wood, an'—I wuke fur Mees M'rier, Gawd bless her—wheneber she wan's me. I eez industrious, I eez. I kin allus fin' plenty to do, an' me an' Sylvie, eez savin' money to buy us our leetle home."

"Now, Rube, Dr. Possum has been brought here on the charge of vagrancy."

"Vagrancy? Wha—what's dat, Marse Johnnie?"

"They say he's idle, worthless, and don't make a living; is that so?"

"Why—Why, Marse Johnnie, he mus' be

makin' a livin'—'cause thar he eez. How—how could he be thar ef he warn't livin'? Speerits can't come to Cote."

"He's living all right, but does he make it? Or does he live off of other people? Do you know Dr. Possum?"

"Cos' I know Dr. Possum! He's a mighty fine doctair, he eez. People leefes on Dr. Possum more like Dr. Possum leefes on 'em. Oui, Oui, I knows Dr. Possum. He's a mighty goot doctor, he is."

"How do you know? Did you ever employ him in your family? Did he ever treat Sylvie?"

"Oui, Oui, Massa, he treat my Sylvie, an' he treat her mighty goot, too. He dassent do annyting else," doubling up his fist and shaking it, "'cause eef he didn'—he'd git his ole haid knock off."

"I mean, does he ever give Sylvie any medicine?"

"Oui, Oui, Massa. He gife my Sylvie medicin'. She has rhumatiz mighty bad sometimes, an' he gifes her medicine."

"Does it do her any good?"

"Certainment, mighty goot medicine. It hope her powerful sometime."

XI

SYLVIE—DR. POSSUM—'LISBETH

SYLVIE, a comely, nut-brown woman of the generous proportions which betokened rare culinary ability, rose in her seat, shamefaced and uncertain as to what was expected of her.

Her dress certainly did credit to her reputation as a fine laundress. It was of neat blue cotton, washed and starched and ironed to the last degree of nicety. A long white apron was tied around her waist and a white muslin kerchief was folded simply across her vast expanse of matronly bosom.

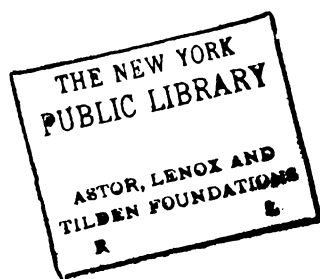
The crowning work of art was the gay bandana square, tied and knotted with consummate skill over her hair—for she was of the old-fashioned type, and eschewed the befrilled darkies, products of the war.

"I'm a 'spectable woman, I is," she was used to say proudly, when any criticisms were indulged in concerning her old-fashioned dress, and the bandana badge of servitude.



“Sylvie”





"I'm still a workin' an' I ain't ashame to war workin' close. When I'se able to quit work an' set in de parlor like white folks—den is time 'nuff fur white folk's ole cast off close."

It needed only a look into her kind, motherly face to be assured of her honesty and integrity of purpose, also of the gentleness of her heart.

"Come here, Sylvia, and tell us about Dr. Possum."

Sylvia came forward, anxious and uneasy, and being duly sworn to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, seemed deeply impressed with the solemnity of the occasion, and somewhat frightened, when the prosecuting attorney took her in hand.

"What is your name?"

"Sylvie."

"Sylvie what?"

"Sylvie Taylor."

"What is your husband's name?"

"Rube."

"Rube what?"

"Jest Rube."

"Ain't his name Taylor, too?"

"No sur, dat was my las' husband's name,

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an' I jes' keep it, bein' as Rube say he ain't got no name 'ceptin' fur signin', an' everybody 'roun' here knows me an' is jes' use ter de name of Taylor."

"So you have been married before?"

"Course I is," with a certain air of superiority.

"Once before?"

"Once befo'? Ole a woman as I is never bin married but onc't befo'?" she asked, aggrieved by such a question.

"Well, then, how many times have you been married?"

"I can't jis zactly 'member—three, four—mebbe mor'n dat."

"Are your husbands all dead, or divorced?"

"I ain't had but one par uv licenses, and one par uv 'voces, and dat's since de war; dey costs a big lot of money. I had one husban' die at Camp Dick Roberson, and den anudder husban' kill in de army, an' de naix one—he wuz a soldier, an' cum back dot lazy an' triffin' I could'n 'sport him wid my washin'—so Miss M'riar jes bought me a pair o' 'voces. After a while, when Rube kept a comin' 'round down thar in N' Orleans, a botherin' me 'bout my work, an' pesterin' 'bout me to mar'y him, I

jist tole him to go 'long 'bout his business—an' he did. Then he cum up here, an' bought a par o' licenses, an' I thought 'twasn't no use to fling away all dat money fur nothin'; so we went out to see Mis' M'riar, an' she sent fur a preacher what mar'ied us in de dining-room, wid Marse Johnnie dah, an' all de udder chillen what I'd nussed, a standin' 'round; some uv 'em a cryin' 'cause Rube was a goin' to take me back down South. An' den Mis' M'riar, an' Marse Willyum shuk han's wid bof uv us, an' dey had ice cream an' cake fur us out on de back porch. 'Cause dey say dat was de fust rale sho nuff weddin' I eber had; dey didn' use ter hab enny licenses."

"So you think this one will last better than the others?"

"I 'low dey'll las' as long as we bof live—ef we live dat long—'cause Rube is mighty good to me."

Not relying much upon Sylvia's testimony to strengthen his case against Dr. Possum, only hoping to cast a little reflection upon her character by the allusions to her numerous husbands, the prosecutor turned her over to the young attorney for the defense, who asked:

"Now, Sylvia, tell the court what you know about Dr. Possum?"

"I jes know dis—he's a mighty good doctor, Marse Johnnie," in a tone of voice which carried conviction with it.

"You've used his medicine, have you?"

"Yes, suh, I is. I use it faithful. Heap of folks is 'bout medicine like dey is 'bout 'ligion, an' eberyting else; dey ain't faithful, an' dey don' get no good outen it."

"You found it helped you?"

"Yes, suh. It hoped me powerful; it's powerful good medicine. Dr. Possum shore is a powerful good doctor. I don' know what ennybody kin say agin Dr. Possum, a po' ole critter like him."

"They say he is lazy, and trifling, and won't work for a living."

"Lazy?—an' triffin'? Dey orter a seed him when he was a husky young nigger, a workin' in de fiel's, wid de best uv 'em.

"Now, 'cause he's ole, an' broke down, an' can't work no mo', an' his ole Massa what raise him, not heah to speak a good word fur him—killed in de war—an' de boys, what he carried 'bout on his shoulders, bof of 'em gone; one killed at Perryville, in sight of here, an' de

udder one brung back here to die, on de ole springs grown's whah his mammy danced when a young gal—'n' 'cause dey ain't here to speak up fur him, an' his ole Miss in her grave out yander in de cemetery, wid a broke heart, day say he's triffin' an' lazy!

"No sich a thing!

"He's crippled hisself! Wid de rumatiz, from workin' in de cole, an' de wet, in season and out o' season, for his ole Massa, an' ole Miss, an' de young Massas what ain't none uv 'em hear to speak fur 'im."

For the most part she stood with her hands folded before her—her soft, tender eyes fixed upon the face of the Judge, who did not interrupt her, but when she spoke of the cemetery, she looked far away out of the window, with eyes full of tears, toward the sacred spot, which she indicated with a wave of her hand. And there were other tears in the audience.

Nobody spoke a word. She was the first to break the silence. With folded hands, she began again.

"No, suh! He ain't triffin', tho' cose he is ole, an' can't work—to say work—but he does the bes' he kin. He's 'dustrious as he kin be, a getherin' of the leaves an' de yerbs, whot our

good Lawd has give us fur de healin' uv de nation—de good book say so; an' ef Dr. Possum don' gether de leaves an' tings he put here 'spressly fur us, whose a gwine ter do dis heyer work what he's 'gagin' in fur de blessed Marster?

"Who's a begrudgin' dis po' ole downtrod nigger what he would a had by rights—if nothin' had happened—a seat in his Marster's chimbley corner; an' plenty to eat—what's flung to him now like he wuz a po' ole dog?

"I don't 'grudge him his dinner when he fetches me my medicin', an' I don't know any white folks what I use ter know, as would grudge him ennything to eat."

Shaking her head sadly, she took up a corner of her apron to wipe the moisture from her cheeks, and went on:

"Times is change, Massa Jedge. I dunno whah de 'sponsibility lais; at whose do', but I wants to axes you, ef hit is jedgment an' justice to throw dese ole broke down niggers out—de town is full of 'em—when dey ain't able to work no mo'—den 'rest 'em, an' fetch 'em inter cote, an' thro' 'em inter jail, an' put 'em in de brilin' sun, on de rock pile, or in de work-house in de winter, 'cause dey can't work no

mo'? Dese here old niggers what was shade in de summer, and backlogs in de winter for deir marsters, what's gone, or too po' to take keer uv 'em.

"Is dis de freedom what wuz promised 'em, when they took 'em from whar dey b'longed?

"I'se nothin' but a po' colored woman, but I'se got feelin's fur my own color."

There was a deep silence in the court room during this able defense of Dr. Possum by Sylvie. She had warmed up with her subject, and so impressed her hearers, including the Judge, with the justice of her plea for the poor old homeless slaves, thrown upon the tender mercies of the world, that the acquittal of Dr. Possum was a foregone conclusion, and a mere matter of form.

I saw "Marse Johnnie" congratulating his two witnesses in the yard, after the adjournment of the court.

"I was proud of you, 'Marse Johnnie,'" said Sylvie, with beaming eyes. "I couldn't a believed it wuz de little curly-headed boy what used to go to sleep on dis breast. I don' b'lieve annybody else could ever got Dr. Possum out uv jail but you," speaking proudly, never dreaming for a moment that it was she

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who had "turned the trick," but "Marse Johnnie" told her so.

As for Dr. Possum, his good medicine met with ready sale thereafter, perhaps, whether it was ever used or not. Anyway, "Mis' Mriar" took care of him.

Just opposite the court yard I was greeted by a pleasant surprise. Across the street in an open trap sat Miss Claiborne, awaiting her father's return from the clerk's office, where he was detained by a matter of business.

She was already surrounded by a circle of admirers, three deep, each one striving for a word or a look. I was not surprised to see the Bachelors, nearly all of them, there, claiming her attention; even the Judge bestowing a timid nod of greeting and stopping for a handshake, as he hurried from the courthouse.

Without attracting special attention, I managed to edge myself in through the circle, and was rewarded by a swift blush of consciousness, as she let her eyes rest on mine for a moment, while I was holding her neatly gloved hand in my clasp.

She had taken advantage, she said, of a little business which had brought her father to court

to drive over with him for some shopping. They would be returning to Bellevue in a short while. Before I could collect my wits, I was elbowed away by another applicant for a word or a glance; her father returned, and I was left standing with her other suitors, watching the high-stepping thoroughbreds swiftly bearing her away.

Could it be possible that only three days had elapsed since that day on the cliffs? It seemed like a month.

Meantime, while I had been in the courthouse, interested in Dr. Possum, Sylvie and Rube, the town had been filling with strangers from the neighboring villages. "Court Day," I found, was quite a social and political reunion, as well as market day. In consequence the streets were now jammed with vehicles of every description, from the homely ox-cart of Chapline Hills to the shining coaches from the Manor Houses on the outlying farms.

It was near noon, and the black "mammies" who had stationed themselves upon the pavement beneath the shade of the trees with their stands, on which were displayed gingerbread, apples, and cider, were doing a fine business.

They were very neat and picturesque in

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their attire, with long white aprons and kerchiefs folded about their necks, their heads gaily turbaned with bandanas. Keeping constantly in motion a bough fresh cut from a peach tree before leaving home, by way of warding off the flies, they gossiped with their cronies.

One little youngster, right from the hill country, stood with his hands rammed down in his pockets, intently regarding the ginger cake, cut in many fancy shapes, horses, rabbits, boys and girls. To the "mammies'" offer of a sale, he answered:

"I ain't got no money!"

I then stepped up and bought for him a cake, a girl gayly attired in red, white and blue, by a liberal use of icing.

"This is a beauty," I said, handing it to him.

He took it, his eyes lighting with joy, as he gazed at it.

"See what a pretty nose she has." He nodded his head in assent.

"When you get tired of looking at her, you can eat her. Isn't she pretty?" I asked.

"Yes, but I'm tired of looking at her now." And he straightway fell to eating her.

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A few steps further down the street a man with a barrel of cider was assuaging the thirst of the multitude, while wagons full of melons stood on every corner. I never saw a more sociable, pleasure-seeking crowd.

XII

A TYPICAL KENTUCKY HOME—THE MAJOR—
MIS' M'RIAR

WHILE waiting our attorney's leisure, I spent some pleasant days rambling about the quaint old town and its suburbs. At the close of a rare June day after a longer tramp than usual over hill and dale of this beautiful land, I found myself far from the little village and Miss Peggy's comfortable bed. The sun had long since sunk to rest behind the trees, drawing after him his curtains of crimson and gold, and a spell seemed to be laid upon all nature.


The subdued murmur of the brook, the graceful swaying of the trees, the gentle undulations of the moving grain, the dreamy hush in the air were all suggestive of repose, while the peaceful valley seemed to be nestling in the shadows of the far-away mountainous range of hills known as "The Knobs."

Out of the east the full moon came, rising like an immense ball of crimson fire, traveling rapidly around to the zenith. The birds with

which the woods in this region abound had already sought their roosting places in the thick foliage of the trees. With the falling of night there was a hush almost oppressive until from the neighboring stream a single frog began to croak. In an instant he was answered by all of the other frogs within sound of his voice, and soon the woods seemed filled with the voices of the night. Crickets hidden till now in the grass chirped merrily as they crawled from their hiding places, while hundreds of katydids, from beneath the thick leaves of the trees, spurred each other on to noisy accusations of the hapless maiden who had so provoked them to talebearing.

Away in the distance a lone whip-poor-will from time to time made his moan, answered by a solitary owl, which was perched in the very tree above my head, blinking at the moon, which seemed bent on spoiling his sport this short summer night. I halted in the middle of the turnpike road, which stretched out before me like a silver stream meandering through a deep wooded vale.

From a mile post on my left I discovered that I was still a mile from my destination. On my right was a gateway, the stone fence in



which it was set half hidden by a rank growth of sturdy ironweed, which, like a helmeted knight, bore proudly aloft its plumes of purple flowers, and by its side the elder bush, whose fine creamy blossoms were spread out like a filmy bridal veil over its satiny green leaves. A superb green Virginia creeper with its trumpet-shaped flowers of crimson and gold, disputing possession of the fence with the plumed knight and the veiled maiden, had run ahead and climbing the stone posts, fell in festoons almost down to the gate which barred the entrance into a long avenue, where oaks and elms, interlacing their branches overhead, formed a delightful archway of living green, through which the moon was now casting slender beams like silver arrows upon the green sward beneath.

At the other end of the arch a light was gleaming, bright as the evening star. Toward it I turned my face and with my arms resting upon the bars of the gate, was wishing with my whole heart that I was at my journey's end, when my ears were assailed by a sharp clatter of hoofs on the road at my back—a sudden stop—and a cheery voice: "Hello, stranger!"

"Beg pardon," I answered, unlatching the gate and swinging it back, that the possessor of the voice might enter, as was clearly his purpose. Then feeling that some explanation was necessary for having planted myself, as it were, in his gateway, I continued:

"I was tempted to-day to take a stroll along your beautiful highway and have diverged so often from the beaten track that I find myself a little belated as you see, and was resting on your gate, wishing myself at my journey's end." I had scarce finished speaking before he had made room for me beside him, saying:

"Then, my friend, consider yourself at your journey's end. Jump in."

He had driven through the gate, leaving me to close it behind him.

"But, my dear sir," I began, embarrassed that I had been taken so literally.

"No buts about it—You must be a stranger in these parts or you would have known when you saw that light," pointing ahead with his whip, "that there was a house, and in every Kentucky home the string to the latch hangs outside—Come, jump in."

Somehow, he compelled me, and I was not loth to be compelled to accept his invitation

and welcome to "Hayfields." The fine thoroughbred which he drove was not five minutes carrying us to our destination, but that was time enough for us to make ourselves known to each other.

I mentioned my name; that was enough, for these hospitable people need only a clew to unravel the history of anyone who can rightfully claim a drop of Virginia blood in his veins. I soon found that he knew more of my forefathers than I did myself, and doubt not, if the ride had been long enough, that we would have established a relationship. We were therefore on terms of friendship by the time our beacon light had been transformed into a lamp in the hall into which I was ushered.

The family had retired, but we found in the dining-room an ample and most appetizing luncheon, which had been set out for the master, whom I found on closer acquaintance and in better light, just what I had expected, a typical Kentuckian, like

"The fine old English gentleman,
Of the olden time"

as goes the old song.

After dispatching the luncheon, the lamp

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was given to me and I was shown by my host into the spare chamber, just off the broad reception hall of the spacious, old-fashioned house. Only a weary tramp like myself could fully appreciate the sweetness of the wide, snowy bed, which almost filled one corner of the room. Into it I climbed and was soon fast asleep, nor did I awake until the sun came over the hilltop and, peering through the trellis which shaded my windows, fell in wavering fantastic patches upon the cool matting which covered the floor.

A delightful breeze was stirring the white muslin blind which draped the lower half of my window, and freighted with the dew-distilled odors from the thousands of flowers which carpeted the hillside, stole into the room to rouse me from my bed.

"How delightful! No wonder these people remember so fondly and return to their old homes from the uttermost parts of the earth," I thought, between sleeping and waking, then turned over for another nap. In vain, for the odorous air was now filled with music. Beneath the eaves of the house and in the caps of the tall fluted columns of the front porch a whole colony of sparrows had built their nests,

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and the young ones were now clamoring for their breakfasts.

The busy bees were astir and buzzing over their work amid the flowers; not more persistent, however, than the humming birds, which, on tireless wings, hung over the sweet honeysuckle, which was trained upon a lattice near my window, darting hither and thither, rifling the flowers of their sweets. Over and above all were the songs of the mocking birds, which had risen early from their nests. On tiptoe I stole to my window to observe them.

“ Pouring from each quivering throat
Joyous music, note on note,
Till maddened with their own refrain
They'd soar to catch the dying strain;
Then, perching, sing it o'er again.”

When they were tired out with their trills and roulades and cadenzas, they began mimicking the barnyard fowls so successfully that these more useful birds commenced at once to assert themselves and call loudly for their morning meal.

Fully aroused by these unusual sounds, I hastily dressed myself and sauntered out into the porch, which, though facing the east, was


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so well shaded by forest trees and vines that I found it delightful at this early hour.

From the little valley in front a mist was arising, partly obscuring the hill beyond. The spiders had been busy while I slept, for innumerable webs had been woven in the branches of the trees and the sun shining through them had converted the woof into threads of fine spun silver and gold; while the dewdrops fast prisoned in the mesh, sparkled like jewels, diamonds, rubies, topaz, sapphires or emeralds, as wafted by the breeze, they shimmered and reflected the flowers, the trees and the skies.

Without ceremony I took the big armchair, which stood in the best shaded corner. It was scarce five o'clock. No one beside myself was astir and I had abundant opportunity to mark my surroundings. To the left was the orchard, the trees bending beneath their loads of fruit in every stage of ripening, and in their shade stood a dozen or more beautiful calves munching the fallen fruit, impatient and on the alert, for the lowing of the cows in the distance warned them of the approach of milking time.

In a little while a milkman with his pails appeared upon the scene and letting down the



orchard bars, stopped to speak to the calves, as if they were a group of children.

"Here comes daddy," was his greeting as he passed on through the beds of clover, which spread like a carpet beneath his feet, ankle deep, though bent with honey-laden blossoms.

"But the clover, bent to its utmost length,
Comes swinging back with a fragrant breath,
And the creamy bloom in its cup of green
Remains unsmirched and fair and clean."

The whole troop of calves "bah-ing" with delight, frisked at his heels, disturbing at every bound the swarm of bees which were hidden among the flowers.

In the distance I could hear the lowing of the cows. "Sook Cow, Sook Cow," called the milker as he strode through the clover towards the bars leading into the meadow land beyond.

"Mooh, ooh, Mooh, ooh," answered the cows. Their lowing almost seeming changed into laughter as they ran to meet him with delight. Then all was silent and there was no sound from the orchard save the buzzing of the bees.

In the foreground where the lawn merged into the meadow land I now caught a glimpse

of a dozen or more beautiful colts—embryo kings and queens of the turf, no doubt—making wonderful bone and sinew as they browsed upon the famous blue grass.

To the right of me was the garden, a great big country garden, five acres at least, separated from the lawn by a neat fence, completely overrun with morning-glories, now in full bloom. Within I could see beds of old-fashioned flowers; beyond, long rows of vegetables, and away beyond that, a field of corn from which a laborer was now emerging, carrying over his shoulders a sack of green roasting ears, for our breakfast, no doubt.

My host—"The Major"—now appeared upon the gallery in a cool morning dress, linen trousers made full and wide without reference to fashion, and a light linen coat. He wore no vest and an old-fashioned black satin stock supported the standing collar which encircled his throat. His fine fresh complexion looked fresher than ever after his morning bath and his dark blue eyes were bright and sparkling with good humor. The pleasant impression made upon me the night before was more than sustained.

At the breakfast table I was introduced to

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the mistress of the house, who presided with rare grace and dignity over a delicious meal, such as only these notable Kentucky housewives know how to order. She made a lovely picture, seated behind the silver urn with a son of Ethiop stationed at her back moving a gorgeous bunch of peacock feathers. It was a very long table and on each side were seated the children, three handsome sons and three daughters, one of them married; and three grandchildren.

"I love to have my children all about me," said "The Major." I found out afterward that everybody called him "The Major." With pride and affection he glanced from one to the other. There was yet one vacant seat.

"We always place an extra chair, for someone is likely to drop in."

"Like myself," I made haste to answer.

How pleasantly I recall every detail of that meal; the wit, the bright repartee, the anecdotes that seasoned the repast, for the Major was a famous story-teller and he had a most appreciative audience.

This was in the early seventies, before the blight which fell after the war had had time to dull the sharp characteristics of the people,

to change their habits of life or to mar the beauties of their landscape.

After the meal we sauntered back to the front porch, the Major and I to smoke and talk. Pretty soon an open family carriage was driven to the door, the son of Ethiop who waved the peacock plumes holding the reins, looking as solemn as an owl.

"Who's going to town, Sam?" asked the Major.

"Miss M'riar," sententiously answered Sam.

Just then the mistress appeared in the doorway, followed by her Abigail, burdened with parcels.

"Where are you going, my dear?" queried the Major.

"I am going to town."

"And what's all this?" pointing to the packages.

"Only a little fruit for poor old Mr. A. and a loaf of Harriet's salt-rising bread for Mrs. B., and a bottle of buttermilk for Aunt Dicy and a jug of cider for old George and some little things for Phoebe."

"Ah, you are going into the heart of Africa! Now, there's a trip for you," address-

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ing me. "Miss Maria will show you 'Smoky Row,' I dare say."

"Certainly, if you wish it," answered she, turning to me.

"I do very much wish it."

The little grandchildren, a girl and a boy, came running up the walk clamoring to go with "Grandma," and, they too, were stowed away in the capacious vehicle along with the packages.

XIII

"AFRICA," "SMOKY ROW," "UNCLE GAWGE,"
"FEESHIN "

THROUGH the circular drives of the lawn and the long avenue we drove and in a few minutes were out upon the "pike" and within the limits of the town of which the Major's farm was the boundary line.

We did not turn into the street leading into the main part of the village, but kept straight ahead to the little creek which cut the town in twain; for on its borders, fringed with water maples and willows, began the negro quarters—"Africa"—so called before the war, when it was a "free negro" settlement, with a good brick church for the nucleus.

The houses were of wood, logs or weather-board, with a little yard or garden attached and nearly all of them had flowering vines trained over the rude porches and about the windows. One fat old "mammy" was sitting in her vine-wreathed porch singing quite blithely,

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“I’m a gwine ter jine de ban’,
Oh cum along chilleren,”

as she strung and broke in two the snaps which filled a pan in her lap.

At her feet rolled a pickaninny, scantily clad and munching a corn dodger. At the gate was a clump of bright-hued hollyhocks, beneath which an old sow was spread out, grunting, while her large family of pigs struggled mightily for their morning meal. In the back yard beneath a peach tree was standing an old mule in dangerous proximity to a beehive, as he flourished vigorously his old tassel of a tail, in a vain effort to keep off the flies.

In the road before us stood a little coffee-colored urchin, his trousers held up by one suspender and under his arm a tin can. Sam, in the bravery of his driving jacket, seemed to transfix him.

“You, Willyum!” called the dame, from the porch.

“M’am,” responded Willyum, without taking his eyes off of Sam.

“Cum’ heyer dis minit. Whah yu bin?”

“Gittin’ bait fur daddy to go a feeshin’.”

“Neber yu min’ yur daddy, keep yur min’ on me. Git dat nickel what’s under de sugar

bowl on de shelf an' run down to de sto' an' git me a flitch o' bacin to cook wid dese beans."

By this time we halted at the gate.

"Laws, ef here ain't Mis' M'riar an' de gran'chillen. Howdy, howdy," exclaimed the old woman, gathering up her beans in her apron and coming out to greet us. "I'll declar' dese heyer chillun gits more'n more like deir gran'pa ebry day. I lay he's proud uv 'em."

"How is Aunt Dicy, to-day?" asked Mis' Maria.

"Porely, Mis' M'riar, porely. She's bin a sufferin' wid a mis'ry in her head an' she's dun doze off."

"Don't wake her. Here's some buttermilk for her."

"Gawd bless you, Mis' M'riar! Ef it wasn't fur de buttermilk, I don't know what she would do. It's all she eats now."

After a little more talk we resumed our drive toward the willow-fringed creek, in which two or three milch cows were standing knee deep in the water while a dozen or more geese were pluming themselves on the banks. In front of us, a long string of ducks were waddling down the street to take their matutinal

swim. We followed, and crossing the shallow stream were soon on Water Street, the thoroughfare upon which "Smoky Row," a number of one-story brick or frame dwellings of uncertain architecture and date or no architecture at all were located. From every window a head, usually that of a woman, was thrust, while the men sat in chairs outside, tilted back against the sides of the houses, and the sidewalk literally swarmed with children and dogs of every size, age and condition. The carriage drew up before the most pretentious of the brick houses.

"This belongs to one of our old servants and is quite a valuable property, bringing her in a nice income, which she has been hoarding. She is ill and her children are afraid she will die without disclosing the hiding place of her wealth and have sent for me to try to find it out from her. I will get out for a few moments and you can interest yourself looking around."

"Good-morning, George," to a gray-haired negro man who came limping out of the doorway with a cane to meet her. "How is Phoebe this morning?"

"Good-mo'nin', Mis' M'riar. It 'pears like

Phoebe's got a turn for de better. Dem drops what yu lef' here de las' time, hoped her pow'ful."

"Can't you persuade her to send for a doctor?"

"Laws bless you, Mis' M'riar," said George, lowering his voice, "Phoebe's too stingy. Ef a doctor wuz ter cum in de do' Phebe would die right dar rutherin' have him cummin' in a runnin' up uv a bill."

All this time he had been fumbling in the bottom of the carriage for the package intended for Phoebe, which, having found, he now carried to the door.

"And there's a jug of cider for you, George," said the mistress, as he helped her to alight from her carriage.

"God bless yu, Mis' M'riar."

"Uncle George, Uncle George," shouted the little grandson after him.

"Ay yi," responded George. "What is it, little marster?"

"Ain't you got a knife?"

"I 'spects mebbe I is," feeling in his pockets.

"And ain't you going to make me a whistle?"

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"Me one, too," piped up the little lass.

"Oh, girls don't want whistles," said the boy.

"They do, and I don't want to be a girl anyhow."

Uncle George was critically examining the elder branch they had brought along for the purpose.

"Dey's bin a layin' fur yu," volunteered Sam, making his first remark.

Uncle George in his good days had been a carpenter, and this was not the first whistle he had made for the little folks, who now watched him eagerly as he fashioned the wood.

"Lize," called a woman from one window to a woman at another, "Is yer gwine ter meetin' to-night."

"No, I ain't. Does yer reckon' I'm a gwine ter lis'en to a Methodis' nigger preach free grace in a Baptis' Church. I'se a close kermunion Baptis', I is, an' I don't 'prove of axing any Methodis', what b'li'ves in free religion an' free salvation an' a fallin' frum grace, to preach fur us.

"Fust thing you know we will have a lot o' backsliders in de church, an' it'll take a lot o'

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mournin' an' prayin' an' shoutin' dis hot weather to fetch 'em back to de throne uv grace."

"Bitsy, aw Bitsy! Go fetch me my specks," called George, to a slim-legged yellow girl in a scant cotton gown, swinging by her arms from a hitch rail.

Betsy let go and disappeared around the corner.

Just then a hen flew off the nest and was indiscreet enough to let it be known by a joyful cackle. Every pickaninny in the street pricked up his ears.

"Good Lawd," exclaimed Liza. "Dat speckled hen lays sooner'n sooner ebery day. I wuz jes' waitin' fur dat aig to make my cake fur de festibul. Zerushy, run an' look in de weeds an' fin' dat aig 'fore some o' dese niggers steal it. Dey's wurs' dan a coon daug arter a coon when dey hears a hen cackle."

"How does yer know hit wuz de speckled hen what laid it?" asked the youngster.

"G'long, nigger. Don't yer reckon I knows her cackle?"

Zerusha must have secured the egg, for there was a terrible flutter and commotion, as

though the hen was rudely disturbed while standing guard over her treasure.

By this time Betsy returned with an enormous pair of brass-rimmed spectacles, which George mounted astride his nose to see that there was no crack in the elder rod.

"This seems to be a fine place for children," I remarked.

"Ay yi, hit tis sur, an' dey's a mighty likely lot, ef de collery nor nuthin' don' take non' uv 'em off. In slavery times dey would be better taken keer uv dan dey is now, 'cause dey would a put a site uv money in deir massa's pockets. Now hit takes a heap o' work to feed 'em." So saying, George prepared to try the whistle to which he had fitted the mouthpiece.

"Give it to me, give it to me," shouted little Miss Nancy, in glee.

"No, me," demanded Dee.

"Me first. I'm the oldest," demanded Miss Nancy.

"And a lady," I added.

"Nothin' but a girl," said Master Dee, with contempt, "and a cry baby." Then he fixed his big blue eyes on George with interest, as the elder rod was cut again and another whistle started.

"Bigger'n better dan Miss Nancy's," explained George.

"How do they make a living?" I asked, looking at the lazy men tilted against the wall.

"Well—'course dey wurks—some, but soon as de craps is laid by dey feeshes most fur a livin'."

"Fishes?"

"Ay yi! Dey goes out to Salt Ribber, 'roun' about de falls an' when dey gits a good string dey cum' 'long by Marse Williums' corn fiel' an' fetches along a few roastin' ears wid 'em; an' water millions an' mush millions air mity mighty plenty dis season."

"Is there no work for them now?"

"Dey's always wurk fur de niggers, but dey don' keer 'bout it now."

"But it seems to me they ought to lay up something for the winter."

"Dey ain't bin use ter it; Marse Willium he sp'ilt his niggers an' he'll jest hev ter take keer uv 'em—least ways de ole ones."

"Who is Marse Willium?"

"Why de Major, uv course," answered George, amazed at my ignorance. "He don' neber 'spect to fin' any corn on de aidges uv

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his fiel's; an' he don' set no traps in de water million patch."

"Say, George," called one of the men from the pavement. "'Llection's mos' here an' nobody don' know how you's gwine to vote."

"Go way, nigger, don' bodder me 'bout pollyticks. I kin tell yer one thing, though. I ain't got no use fur dese heyer dimmyjons, what can't tell a nigger how to git money like a white man widout work. An' I'll tell yer anudder thing, I ain't no straddle bug; fust on one side uv de fence, den on de udder, dependin' on which side de whisky is."

George now fitted in the mouthpiece and tried the whistle, which enraptured Dee.

Half way up the street where the crowd was chiefly gathered was the store. The proprietor now stuck his head out and called:

"Aw, Mister Smith!"

"Ay yi," answered George.

"Mr. Merriam's bin heyer an' lef' word he'd give yer a dollar to cum up an' fix somethin' 'bout de mill."

"It's ompossible fur me ter go," answered George. "I'm bizzy now."

"Yer better go, he's lookin' fur yur."

"Don' yur see me a makin' whistles fur de chillun?"

I remonstrated; I told him I'd make all of the whistles the children wanted.

"No, no; Uncle George," spoke up Dee.

"Hear dat now," chuckled George; "an' I don't keer 'bout a little job like dat, anyhow. I worked one day las' week an' it mos' laid me up, togedder wid de rheumatiz. An' I 'lowed to go feeshin' ennyhow ter night. I tole de ole 'ooman ter git de bait ready, while I cum down here ter see 'bout Phoebe. Am' it'll nebber do ter let de bait spile."

The storekeeper seemed to be a kind of employment agent, for after awhile he came to the door and called.

"Aw, Miss Liza!—Mr. Smith, will you please ax Miss Jefferson to step to de do'."

By this time Liza made her appearance with a pan of batter on her arm.

"What you want, Mr. Washin'ton?"

"Dah's a white 'ooman in heah, what wants a culled lady to cum an' wash fur her."

"Well I can't cum. I'm a makin' uv a cake fur de festibul," and she turned away without any further argument.

Just then there was a wonderful commotion

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on the street. The whole neighborhood was stirred. The women poured out of the houses, the children ran from the street, the men waked up and all turned with one accord toward the store, a score of yelping dogs at their heels. George was not behind them, for handing over the whistles, he hobbled off at a lively gait in the same direction. The cause of the commotion was a wagon which had turned the corner and was now halting before the store.

"What is it?" I asked Sam.

"*Watermillions*," he answered, with the air of a stoic.


XIV

“BRE’R LOGAN”—A SERMON

My hostess made her appearance about this time, and taking her seat in the carriage, directed Sam to turn into Main Street. Tightening the lines and clucking to his horse, he was just starting in that direction, when something like a faint gleam of pleasure passed over his stolid countenance, as he volunteered a remark.

“Dar’s Bre’r Logan, Mis’ Rier. Don’ yer wan’ ter stop?”

Mis’ Rier did want to stop, but Sam, without waiting for orders, had already stopped, and Bre’r Logan, in answer to her beckoning hand, turned into the street to approach the carriage. He was a tall, dark, brown-skinned negro, well built and well kept, his blue denim overalls and checked shirt neat and clean. He had a face of more than ordinary intelligence lighted just now with a smile. In his hand he carried a kit of carpenter tools. He took off his hat as he approached, and held it in his hand throughout the interview.



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"Good-mawnin', Mis' Maria," and to me,
"Good-mawnin', Marster."

"Good-morning, Logan," responded my hostess.

"Is dare ennything I kin do fer you this mawnin', Mistress?"

"Nothing I think of just now. I heard that Mr. Merriam was looking for a carpenter to make some repairs at the mill, and seeing you with your kit in your hand, I thought maybe you might like the job."

"Thankey marm, I was jest finishin' a little job for Mr. Smith, and couldn't go when he sent for me, and jest heerd he ain't got nobody yit, and am agoin' right thar now. Thankey marm."

"This is Logan Dupee, the pastor of the Baptist church, which you saw near Aunt Dicey's; and this is Mr. Conway, Logan."

"Sarvent, Mr. Conway," he said, smiling as he gave a little flourish of his hat.

"And you find time to work while tending your flock?" I asked, thinking of the lazy negroes I had just seen.

"Oh, yes, suh, I finds time. The Marster hisself was a carpenter, jist like me, and worked at the bench. St. Paul worked for his


livin', an' blessed Gawd for it. I disremember the tex' right now. All the disciples worked for their livin' so fur as I know, the endurin' time they was a workin' fur deir Marster, and that's how comes it that I don't consider myself none too good to work."

"Not too good:—but I should think you would need some time for study, and preparation."

He laughed, shaking his head, "You see, Marster, white folks, and culled folks is diff'rent. De white folks wants thar preachers edicated, as it is fittin', an' when they gits edicated, they natchelly wants to talk 'bout somethin' to hear theirselves talk, an' they've gut to study up sumthin' to talk 'bout, you see. Wid culled folks its diff'rent. Ef I wuz edicated and studied up what to talk 'bout, my people would set thar with their mouths open, wond'ring what all that hifalutin' talk was about; or mos' likely go to sleep."

"You've got the same religion as the whites."

"Yes, the same, 'ceptin' it's different, as we looks at it. I looks at it as jes' a plain message I've got to bring to my people. Dat Jesus Christ is the son of God, an' cum into dis



worl' to save sinners,—an' all is sinners—an' all they's got to do is to b'lieve on him an' be baptized. Now they ain't no studyin' 'bout dat. Ef Mis' Maria here was to tell me to go up to Danville and tell everybody up thar they's got scyarlit fever down here and dey must run all of their chillen out of town, an' ef dey can't do that, tie a bag of assefeti 'bout deir necks, that wouldn't requier no studyin' how to take that message and the mammies up thar would onderstan' it and run, or buy assefeti; or both."

Even Sam laughed at this.

"Of course, I know jest how it is. Ef one ub de fine preachers knows he's goin' to preach to a big crowd, five hundred or five thousan' people, they nachelly wants to have somethin' good to say to 'em; and they studies it all up as is fitten fur edicated preachers, but the apostles, they was jes' plain workin' men like me and when they had five thousan' men askin' 'em 'bout all the mysterious things what was happenin' them days, they didn't take no time to study 'bout it, they jes' tol' 'em the truf' as they knowed it and when they asked what they must do to be saved, they tol' 'em in a mighty few, plain words. An' dey all went out an' done jes' as they tol' 'em. Now that's jes' as

much as my po' ignorant people can understand'. So what's de use of my studyin' up ennything better than that, even ef I could?"

"And, of course, you can't improve on that," said "Mis' Maria."

"No'm, I can't, and if I was stayin' at home studyin' I might lose the chance to save some po' soul by the wayside. Philip was a po' laborin' man, like me, an' was a walkin' along the dusty road one day when he see a rich man comin' along in his chairot. Philip was tired, an' the Lawd says to him, 'Ask him to let you ride.' And so he did, and he found the rich man studyin' about somethin' he didn't understand', and the po' laborin' man 'splain it to him, all about the blessed Marster, as I just now told you, and when the rich man told him he understand', an' he says to Philip, says he, ef all he had to do was to be baptized, here was plenty water, why not do it right now? Why—Philip didn't have to study about it, he just got out of the chariot and dipped him into the water and they both went about their bizness."

"He just preached him a little sermon, like you've preached me, and a very good one," said I.

"Well, Marster, ef you think it's a good

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one, they ain't no use studyin' 'bout it. The crick's mighty handy," smiling as he pointed down the street where I could see the waters shimmering in the sunlight.

"Well—you see—I didn't know it was such a simple process as you tell me. *I'll* have to study about it."

"Neither did the rich man."

"If it is so simple, why is 'getting religion,' so difficult a matter with your people?" I asked, mindful of the conversation I had just heard on the Row.

"Because of the hardness, not of their hearts, but their heads. They's used to work-in', and they want to work out their own salvation, a moanin' and a groanin'. I don' b'lieve in it, an' I spostulates with 'em 'bout it, but I has to let 'em 'cum thro' in their own way. It seems to satisfy 'em better. But I'll tell you, Mis' Maria, while I'm workin' I don't get time to visit the sick an' the needy, an' the po' and the 'flicted, but the Good Lawd has put it into your heart to help me an' into the hearts of other good white people, an' I thanks you for it. I was jes' goin' to drap in an' see Phoebe; but sence I see you cummin' away, I'll jes' run on to Mr. Merriam's an' see what he wants."

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Replacing his hat, he started off at a rapid gait.

"A very fine character, I should judge," said I.

"Yes, very few have mastered so completely the simplicity of religion. Now, Sam, you may drive us up the street."

After leaving "Smoky Row," we were driven to the post office, where I found quite a handful of letters awaiting me, and while my hostess attended to some shopping, I was taken to my hotel, where I wished to freshen my toilet, and pack a little valise to carry back with me to Hayfields. For, as already forecast, we had found a distant relationship, my hostess being one of the nine thousand nine hundred and ninety and nine Claibornes scattered broadcast over the country.

This being the case, I could not resist the temptation to accept for a few days the hospitality of their home, so graciously urged upon me.

While waiting for her, I looked over my letters, one, mailed from "Cogar's Landing," receiving my first attention. It was from Jack, who had run down for a visit of a few days at Bellevue. He wrote:

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"And whom do you think I find here? Jimmie Dunbar. You remember him at college? A handsome, fine young fellow, who was dividing his time equally between Shakespeare and mathematics. If you remember, he belonged to the Dramatic Club, and made a most pleasing lover in all of the little plays staged by the boys. I find he has lost nothing of his gift in that line, for he, like everybody else who comes within range of the fair 'Lisbeth's eyes, succumbed completely. It seems, however, he has made mathematics and engineering his profession. Like yourself, he has been detailed for work upon the bridge, and while awaiting orders, is paying court to 'Lisbeth.

"With all of the love speeches from "Romeo," the "Lady of Lyons," and others upon the tip of his tongue, what chance has a poor devil of a fellow,—half soldier, half farmer,—got in the game? Come over and help me out, by at least creating a diversion.

"'Lisbeth asked about you the other day, and I promised to write and invite you over. When will that pesky little law business be finished?"

Dunbar! I remembered him well. A clever young Virginian, who made love to all the

girls, and they in turn always seemed fascinated with his player's art. I confess that I was somewhat disturbed by this news.

Why should I be?—Why? Why, if I honestly meant to give her up to Jack?

In spite of myself, my mind would stray longingly back over the barren waste of three weeks, to that one heavenly day, which no one could ever take from me. Taking out the little broken sunshade I confess I was absurd enough to kiss it, and blush over the kissing.

Then I began to wonder how long Dunbar had been there; how long will he stay; do they drive down those cliffs together; do they stroll along the banks gathering the ferns, which I noticed grew in such abundance in the shady places; does she watch the stars come out with Dunbar? I hoped they would not sit in the moonlight together, remembering it was now at its full.

"If she does, what matter to me?" I asked, pulling myself together with a jerk, "since I am pledged to Jack?"

All the same, I wished the "pesky little law business" settled, in order that I might at least be upon the ground.

I read the letter over again and dwelt upon

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the last clause. " 'Lisbeth asked about you the other day and I promised to write and invite you over."

How tempting—I could scarce resist, but—I remembered Jack. He was my friend, and while the mood was on me, I took up my pen and made excuses. By this time the carriage was at the door, and I hurried down with Master Dee, the little grandson, who had been sent up to fetch me; glad to get rid of myself, glad to join the Major and divert my mind.

XV

THE MAJOR—THE NEGRO AND THE BALLOT—
SUSANNAH

I HAD already found "The Major" a most rare companion, celebrated throughout the State as a raconteur; a historian, a student of human nature, a great reader of books, as well as men, and an insatiable reader of the daily papers, which came to him from all quarters, North, South, East and West.

He had been educated for the law, and had a strong judicial turn of mind, which would easily have placed him upon the bench if he had chosen to practice his profession. Instead he drifted into politics.

Magnetic, brilliant at repartee, a good comrade, he was a born leader of men. For two terms he represented his district in the State Senate. When offered a seat in Congress, at a time when nomination meant election, he declined after only one night's consideration.

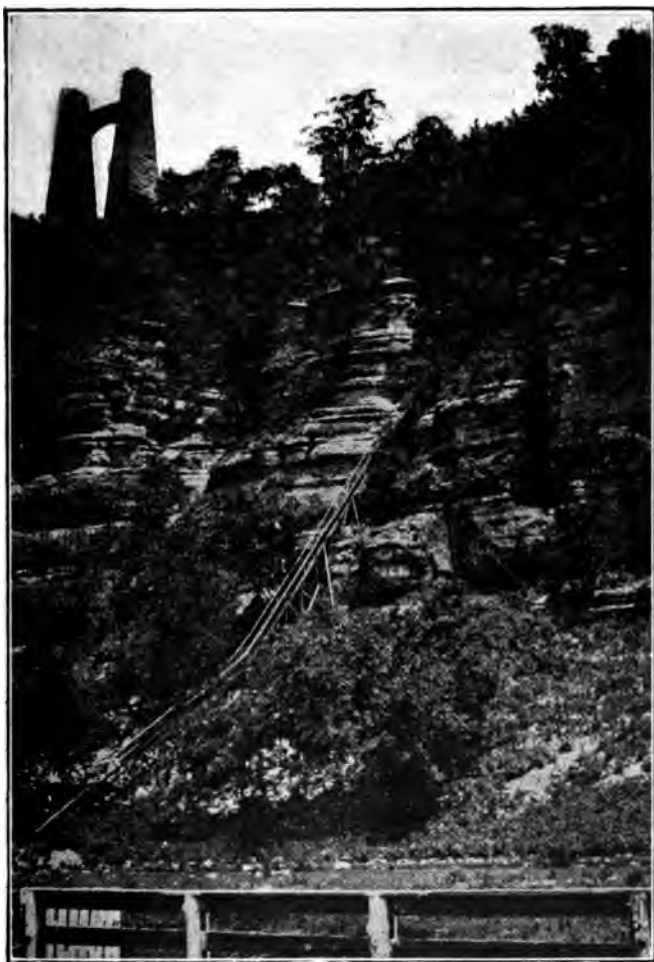
"Politics is a great maelstrom which sooner or later engulfs men's souls," he said to me. "Few men are able to withstand the temptations, the allurements which beset the path of a politician. The code of honesty and morality is growing all the time more lax, and the time will come when the nation will groan with the corruption in high places; when there will be bribe givers, and bribe takers in public office, buying and selling the birthright of the people.

"I am a genial man, fond of my fellows. How do I know that I would have been strong enough to resist the temptations offered? Like a poor moth, circling in the light of the candle, I might have singed my wings, maybe, in the lime light of public life."

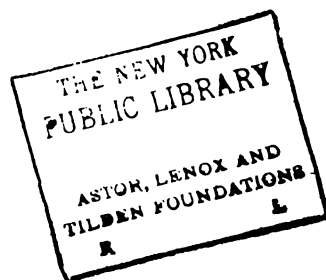
So he argued, and being born with a silver spoon in his mouth, he elected to lead the life of a country gentleman, his hospitable home always open to his friends.

That afternoon found us occupying comfortable chairs at the north end of the porch, beneath the fragrant grapevine, which swayed back and forth above our heads.

The humming birds were still rifling the sweets from the honeysuckle at our backs be-



The Towers



neath my window, and the bees were returning
heavy laden from the orchard,

“Where creamy blooms in cups of green,
Honey-drenched and fair and clean,”

had wooed them since the morning light.

I was explaining to the Major the nature of my business in Kentucky, and the law business which brought me to Harrodstown.

“It seems that the Construction Company that first undertook the bridge went into bankruptcy, and when their assets, the magnificent towers, which make so fine a feature of the landscape, where the proposed bridge will be built were sold, they were purchased by a young man living in the village for the sum of one dollar each, by way of a joke. I am here to arrange the matter and avoid any possible entanglements.”

“You do not contemplate using them?” he asked.

“Not necessarily. It was our intention by way of adding to the picturesque effect, to throw a cable over them, and give to the bridge the appearance of a suspension bridge. Of course that feature can be given up without detriment to the utility.”

"You need have no trouble about it, if that is the case."

"I do not apprehend any. A demand upon him to remove them from our right of way would bankrupt him. But it all takes time, and I am impatient to be getting back to my work." This with a mental reservation, "To 'Lisbeth," would have been nearer the mark.

Speaking of legal matters reminded me of the trial of Dr. Possum, and I related to him the impressive scene in the examination of the witnesses, Reuben Cross and his wife, Sylvia.

He seemed quite affected by the recital and sat silent, looking away over the fields, thinking, no doubt, of the past and the tillers of the soil long since gone, many of them to their last home.

"The poor, poor negroes," he said finally, as if to himself. Then addressing me, he continued:


"If you had gone into the little clerk's office close by the courthouse, you might have seen my father's will, in which, after disposing of his other property, he says: 'My poor, poor negroes. I am very much troubled to know what to do with them. I have concluded that the best thing for them is to leave them to my

wife and son, to their tender care and consideration.' So they were left to us, 'the white man's burden.'

"He had thought of this a great deal. Knowing they are by nature totally unfitted to take care of themselves, he felt that it would be an injustice to them to cast off the responsibility and set them free, unprepared for freedom."

"Perhaps that was the way the Northern people felt about it, when finding them unprofitable in that part of the country, they sold them to their brethren of the South, thus shifting the responsibility, while they were preparing for the great boon of freedom."

"Maybe; yet these people are still far from competent to take care of themselves. They are to this day simply grown-up children. Deprived of their homes, they should now be the nation's wards, cared for, educated, and forced to work for a living. When they have learned to read and write, and have acquired property to protect, then will be time enough to entrust them with the ballot, which we do not give our sons until they are twenty-one. They have given them the ballot while still withholding it from our wives and daughters, refined, edu-



cated women, with property rights to protect. My wife was heretofore willing to trust her property interests in my hands and leave to me the voting of these interests. Now, her negro driver, who can neither read nor write his name, goes in to vote upon these matters of interest to her, a tool of unscrupulous politicians, nullifying perhaps my vote; you are not surprised to hear that she is no longer satisfied.

"My dear sir, do you remember that it has required some four thousand years to bring the white race from a rude state of barbarism to its present condition of intelligence and capability?"

"In other words, to fit them for voting?"

"Yes. How then can we expect these poor creatures, only four hundred years removed from an almost primitive state in the jungles of Africa, to exercise any intelligence in such matters?"

"Particularly if one stops to consider how very, very slow the progress of the white race has been; that some three thousand five hundred years elapsed before they learned the use of such simple things as knives and forks."

"Or pen and ink, for many of the nobility of Queen Elizabeth's time could neither read

Or write. And you will find many of the documents of our ancestors signed with the mark which gave poor Reuben his name, a cross; that after a probation of thousands of years."

"We have certainly made rapid progress since."

"Wonderful! because our time had come for progress."

"May not their time have come?"

"Since nothing happens by chance, I will answer yes—for freedom, properly guarded, not for the franchise, until they are ready for it. That was man's mistake, but it is out of our mistakes God builds up his completeness."

"Has not their close association with the white race since their advent in this country done much to prepare them? Will they not steadily improve?"

"Judging by the past, from the small influence association with the dominant race has had upon the Turanians, I cannot say that I hope for any racial improvement in the near future, except in isolated cases. Take the Orientals, for example. Great Britain, upon whose dominions the sun never sets, has traversed the east with thousands of miles of telegraph wires and railroads, and her ships

anchor in every port, but they have failed utterly to span the thousands of years of tradition and instinct of these people. Wherever you find them, they are Orientals still, in color, in dress, and in their mode of life.

“Take our North American Indians. We have now had them with us for nearly four hundred years. For over one hundred and seventy-five years we have been trying to civilize them. We have made them our wards. They are free men. We are trying to educate them. We have brought them into our schools. We have established schools for them.

“What is the result? I am told that no matter how adaptive they are; how readily they learn; how well pleased they may seem with the advantages given them; when they return to their homes, they return to tents and blankets, and the rude manner of living in which they were born. It is a matter of heredity, and I do not believe that a thousand years of changed environment and responsibility will change their nature, or make them good responsible citizens, to be entrusted with the ballot.

“My dear sir, there is something over and beyond and above all these questions, which we

cannot see and cannot understand. After the flood, in the regeneration of the earth, the Creator himself drew the color lines, separating the races, which have never been obliterated to this day, and never will in my opinion, for Jeremiah asks, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin?" From time immemorial, the colored men have been 'hewers of wood and drawers of water' for their more favored brethren."

"Or as Sylvia put it, 'back logs in winter and shade in summer for their masters.'"

"Just so. It is in accordance with the economy of God that there should be, as there has been in the past, is now, and ever will be, those who order and those who serve. There is no such thing as equality in the universe. There can be no such thing, for there will always be differences in mental attainments, in moral attributes, in wealth, and station. And those who talk to these poor creatures of freedom and equality are doing them an untold injury, for in the end it will separate them from their best friends, the white people."

Of course I had seen quite a good deal of the negroes about Washington, and had been struck with what seemed to me the dominant

trait in their character; loyalty and devotion to "my people" as they called their former owners. Reuben's story of his service to his master in the army and his faithful care of his mistress, was very touching. I spoke of it to the Major. I also told of my visit to the ruined homestead across the river, and of the faithful old slave "David," whom I found in charge of the graves.

"I know, I know. They are examples of the real negro character in their natural surroundings and development. I could recite to you hundreds of such cases. The whole history of the early years of the war was like this. The women and children were entrusted to the care of the faithful slaves, while the fathers, husbands and sons were away in the army. And there was not a single instance of a betrayal of this trust."

"It seemed almost miraculous," I answered.

"Compare their conduct then and now, when as free men, and, more enlightened (?), they are clamoring for recognition and office. In the woman, Sylvia, you saw one of the very best examples of the race. She belonged to me; her mother nursed my two eldest children; she took her place when old enough and nursed

the others, later the grandchildren. Her environments have been exactly the same as those of my own children, and she has in her veins a strain of white blood from one of the most celebrated of the old Virginia families.

“As her plea for the poor negroes showed you, she inherited something of the judicial talent which distinguished this ancestor, from whom she is four generations removed. All of the family had. Her uncle was my foreman as long as he lived, and her brother succeeded him. Without an exception, it was a very valuable family, but they all had their limitations. The fifth and sixth generations showed no improvement, rather deterioration. You saw some of them on ‘Smoky Row,’ the product of one hundred and fifty years of close association with the white race. These people can no more change their nature than a leopard his spots. Some of them will improve with altered conditions; the most of them, free from restraint, will grow worse. Can you imagine them holding offices, dominating the white race, in even the smallest particular?”

“That requires too great a reach of imagination,” I answered.

“I may not live to see it, but you will per-

haps, for with the ballot in their hands, they can *buy* offices, and I do not think the time far off when they will prove a menace to our institutions."

"Might not the same be said of the great foreign element now being brought into the country every year?"

"Precisely. They are more intelligent and better laborers than the negroes, left to themselves; but, coming to us fresh from the hot-beds of communism in the old world, owning no property, and the ballot given them before they are ready for it, is a grave situation for our statesmen to study. The possible effect of the elective franchise of these organized millions of foreigners,—for they will not have gotten off their sea-legs before they will be organizing,—added to the vote of the irresponsible freedmen is appalling to think of. It will paralyze the arm of justice. The legislator, the statesman, the judge on the bench, and the President in his chair, all of them seeking re-election by the votes of these elements, will be afraid to raise their voices to protect the people, by the enactment of such laws as will stay the spreading evils.

"For this reason, I am inclined to believe

that the time will come when it will seem wisest to make all elective offices of longer duration and for one term only. This would free the officeholders from all restraints imposed by the voters.

“In the depleted condition of our army and navy, it seems to me a grave menace, one which will necessitate what we have never before had, a standing army.

“I hope I will never see the day when we will have a great standing army and navy. It would not only burden us with heavy and unnecessary taxation, but would prove a temptation to violate the Monroe Doctrine and thus menace our Republic. I say unnecessary, advisedly, for it has been amply proven that we have no need for a standing army or navy. In the Revolution, our poor half-frozen, poorly-equipped volunteers were able to cope with the most powerful, best-equipped army and navy on earth, and defeated them.

“The same thing happened in 1812, when the British army was annihilated at New Orleans on the last great day of the battle, with the loss of only six men, by a handful of Kentucky and Tennessee volunteers, sick with malaria, starved and poorly armed.

“George Rogers Clark won for us three States from the French and Indians and their British allies, with a little company of one hundred and seventy volunteers, half starved, frozen and poorly equipped, without the loss of a man. He recruited his forces right here at Harrodsfort.

“General Harrison captured the northwest, defeating the Indians, and their British allies, with an army of volunteers. Colonel Joseph Hamilton Daviess raised a regiment in central Kentucky to join him, and was killed making the gallant charge that saved the day.

“In the Mexican War, when there was a call for troops, Kentucky was asked for 2400 men. *Seventy thousand* answered the call. Out of one hundred and fifty-five companies raised, seventy-five of them were disbanded. Mexico became a training ground for raw recruits.

“General Taylor gained the first decisive victory by bringing a force of 1700 wearied, jaded volunteers against a force of at least 6000, and he was able to take Matamoras without resistance. This Mexican War demonstrated that the American militia, properly commanded, could sustain long series of at-

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tacks, and stand steady under the fiercest fire, without becoming demoralized.

“A standing army means an army of hirelings into whose hands we place the guns which they may turn against us. You may live to see the day when there will be no standing armies. We certainly have no need for one.

“In the Civil War, in response to the calls for volunteers, never before were such armies gathered into the field in so short a time as were ours, both North and South. Never were such battles fought. They staggered humanity. Could regulars have done more? It was in view of these facts that Lincoln exclaimed:

“All of the armies of Europe, Asia and Africa combined, with all of the treasure of the earth, our own excepted, in their military chest, with a Bonaparte for a commander, could not by force, take a drink of water out of the Ohio, or make a track on the Blue Ridge in a trial of a thousand years.”

“That was indeed a great tribute to our volunteers.”

“Then what need of a standing army? He also said, ‘If destruction be our lot, we must ourselves be the author and finisher.’

"We are safe enough so far as our defenses are concerned; our army and our navy. Our danger is from within; it lies in an entirely different quarter; one which Lincoln perhaps feared, and if he had lived, would no doubt have obviated. The right of franchise. He had not foreseen how these poor creatures, emancipated by him, with their ballots might become the balance of power in unscrupulous hands. It is not an army and navy that we need. We want legislation, pure and simple and uncorrupted; the legislation of our fathers. We can't have it with present conditions, for as I have indicated before, the ballot controls legislation, State and national."

About that time I noticed approaching the house an unwieldy looking object. As it drew nearer, and emerged from the shrubbery, I saw that it was a woman bending under a heavy bundle, which she was carrying on her back. The Major, sitting with his face turned from the roadway, was not aware of her approach until she called out.

"Howdy, Marse Willyum."

"Who's that?" responded the Major, turning around sharply. In the twilight and deep

shade he did not seem to be able to place her at first.

"It's me. Don' yer kno' Susannah?" with a kind of lisp.

"Susannah? Why I thought you were living down about Dixville?"

"I useter live down thar;—but I ain't livin' thar no mo'. I dun leff; I'se dun tir'd uv de country; want ter cum ter town; I does."

"How did you get here?"

"A waggin jes' give me a lif' to yer fur gate."

"Where's your husband?"

"Dun leff him too."

"Got a divorce?"

"'Vorce? You knows, Marse Willyum, I ain't gut no money to git a par uv 'voces. An' cull'd people don' seem to keer 'bout 'voces nohow."

"Just left him."

"Jis' lef him. You see, Marse Willyum, de wah jis' spile dat man. He ain't struck a lick o' wuk sence he gut back, an' he didn' 'peer ter have sense 'nuff to git hisself wounded, so he could git a penshun, and I'se jis' tir'd a-washin to keep bread in his'n an' de chillen's mouf."

"Don't he do anything?"

"He jis' don' do nuffin'; an' he's dat faul'-findin' dey ain't no gittin' along wid him."

She had laid her bundle down upon the steps, and as she stood there, untidy, ungainly, and uncomely, her hands crossed before her, her patient, homely face upturned toward her master, I could not help being sorry for her.

"Faultfinding, is he?" queried the Major.

"Dat faul'-findin' dat I can' please him no-how. Some white man gut him so drunk 'yudder day, to git him ter vote, dat he ain't git ober hit yit:—an' *las'* night:—*las'* night, he wuz quarl'n 'bout *my* biskits, stidier bein' glad he gut *enny*. He say,—day wuz thick es his foot,—mind yer."

"Maybe you had put too much soda in them?"

"Me! *Me!* A fust class cook, put too much sody, er saleratus in *my* biskit? Marse Willyum, I'm s'prized at yer, I is." There was an accent of wounded feeling in her voice.

"Me;—what's bin a cookin' fur his betters,—de white people, sence befo' de wah,—can't cook to su't de likes o' dat nigger? An' as ter

de sody, Mars Willyum, dat's one ting I do; I puts in de sody always 'cordin' to *my conscience*. I mout me'sure de flour—arter a manner,—an' de lard,—'bout so much,—but I allus puts in de sody,—'cordin' to my conscience. So—when he say *dat*; castin' uv 'fleckshuns on *my* cookin', I jes' ups and says ter him, says I, 'Yer don' have ter *eat* no mo' uv *my* cookin'.'

“‘I'd like ter kno' why?’ says he.

“Says I ter him, says I, ‘Kase I ain't a gwineter cook no mor', I'se a gwine back home,—I is, glad like, an' I wuz glad, 'cause I dun git a load offen my min'.

“‘Whar is *home*?’” says he, 'temptious like.

“‘*Marse Willyum's*,’” sez I, flingin' back my haid proud-like.

“‘You clean furgits you is a *free* 'ooman, nigger:—an' you ain't gut no *Marse Willyum*'—mad like,—‘you ain' gut no marster but *me*.’

“‘I ain't furgits nuffin',’ says I, uncon-sarned like. ‘I jes' *tired* uv freedom; haster wuk too hard fur a livin'. Ef I gut ter work fur *ennybody* I would rather work for *white folks*,’” bowing low as she spoke. “‘An' fur-

thermore, nigger, *you ain't* my marster, don't *you* furgit that.' Dat set him to studyin', an' den I clinches it.

" ' *I'se a gwine back to Marse Willyum.* ' "

" Den he looks 'roun' de room at my things; he looks at de good bed, what he wuz a-layin' on; an' de good quilt, what I had patched up o' nights, after wuken hard all day; an' he looks at de stove; an' de cheers, an' de lamp;—an' he says ter me, says he, ' What all yer gwin-ter car'y back wid yer? ' He jes' 'lowed to say I shan't take 'em. I jes' says to him, says I,—unconsarned like,"—tossing her head back to one side:

" ' I ain't er gwineter take *nuffin'*. I cum here widout nuffin' an' I'm gwineter go back to Marse Willyum an' Mis' M'rier *jes'* like I cum 'way.' Dat niggah kno'd well 'nuff I'd worked fur, an' paid fur ebery ting I had, an' dah's whah he thought he'd *git me*. An' den arter awhile he say,

" ' You gut six chillen, I reckon' yer gwinter taker long de chillen? ' An' dah's whah I *gut him*. Says I ter him says I:

" ' I lef' Mis' M'rier an' Marse Willyum widout *enny* chillen, an'—I ain't gwineter take *no* chillen back wid me,' says I."

"Are your children at school?" asked the Major.

"Dey ain't none uv 'em big 'nough 'ceptin' Susannah, an' she won't lern."

"Won't learn?"

"No, sir; de teacher say she jes' *won't* learn; an' Susannah,—she jes' shet her eyes."

"And so you left them all behind you. Did you know there is to be a circus in town next week?"

"I heerd somethin' 'bout it, an' I see'd de picters, but I lef' eberyting behin' me, what I didn' take wid me, an' here I am, Marse Will-yum."

"Yes; I see. Here you are. Well, go back to the cabins; you'll have to stay to-night. I'll talk to you in the morning. Tell Harriet to give you something to eat."

Lifting her bundle, she soon disappeared around the corner of the house.

"Now I'll have to put her in one of my empty cabins in town. She'll 'take in' washing and could pay rent and take care of herself, but mark my words, right behind the circus wagons next week will come rolling into town her lazy, good-for-nothing husband, who will be hanging around 'Smoky Row.' She

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will have him and the six children on her hands, and I'll have to take care of the whole gang, and never get a lick of work out of one of them. That's just how freedom works out in the majority of cases. Of course there are exceptions."

XVI

THE PIONEERS—THE BURR CONSPIRACY

AFTER a most delicious supper we returned to the front porch to enjoy the long twilight, so delightful in this favored country. We found the air laden with perfume from the bloom of the wild grapevine, swinging like censers above our heads.

From the garden the southern breeze was bringing us delightful odors from hundreds of flowers. Over the meadows still lingered the golden afterglow of the sunset, paling as night came creeping on through the woods.

"How restful and beautiful everything is. This must be in truth God's country, as you people are pleased to call it," said I to my hostess, who had taken her seat near me. She smiled at my enthusiasm, busying herself, meanwhile, with the grandchildren on either side of her.

We were now joined by the Major, bringing in his hand a little picture to show me. The

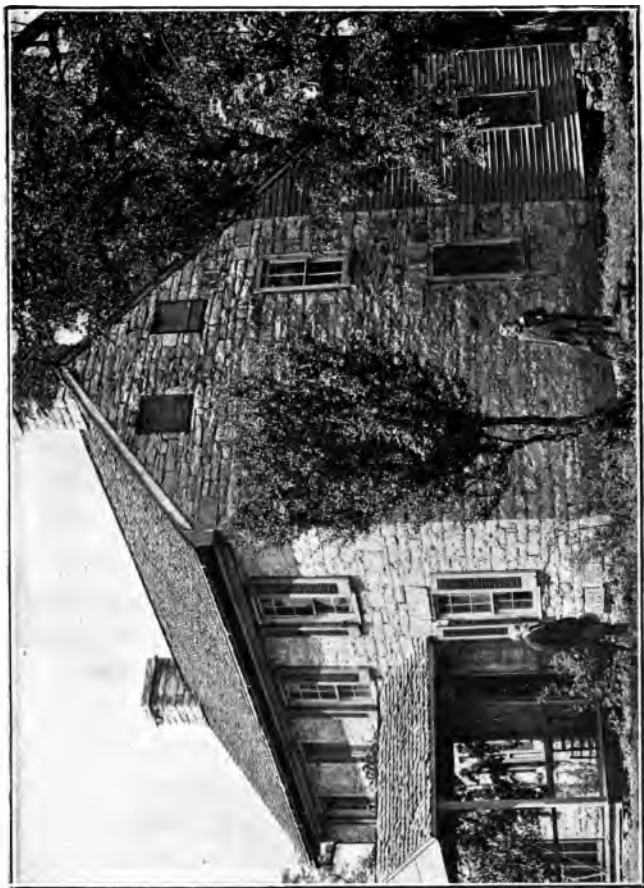
growing darkness prevented my seeing more than the outlines.

"This is a picture of the first stone house I believe that was built in Kentucky. It stands to-day, in a good state of preservation, about seven miles below here, on Salt River. The McAfee brothers made a settlement there before the Revolution. They were of that good old Scotch-Irish stock which has contributed so much to the greatness and prosperity of our country.

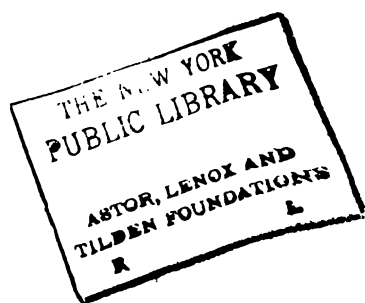
"Their ancestors were Covenanters, and fought at Derry. When they fled to this country they took up arms in the French and Indian war, and after that, following in the footsteps of Harrod and Boone, they were among the early pioneers who penetrated the wilderness. They laid out a large body of land on Salt River, planted their orchards, then hearing that their mother State, Virginia, had need of their services in the Revolution, they went back and fought for their country throughout the war.

"When they returned to their farms in the wilderness, bringing their families with them, they found their orchards blooming."

"After three years' neglect! Isn't that



The First Stone House Built in Kentucky



wonderful? It must have been very cheering to the wives."

"It was indeed; they were in truth the first fruit trees planted in the wilderness,—about the time of the building of Harrods Fort. The women were placed in Harrods Fort, until McAfee Station, a wooden house surrounded by stockades, was built."

"And it was to this house George Rogers Clark came, on his first trip to Kentucky?"

"To the old log house, McAfee Station, his grandmother Rogers, being a sister of Mrs. McAfee. Here it was he planned the defeat of the British and their Indian allies in the West, thereby adding three States to the Union. That, however, is a matter of history."

"I was told that you could show me the table upon which the indictment against Aaron Burr for treason, was drawn."

"You have already seen it, no doubt, since it stands in the north porch, and we cut water-melons on it, every day in season."

"That seems to me a sacrilege."

"Perhaps you are right, for about that old table, now over seventy-five years old, hangs a story of one of the most dramatic episodes in the early history of Kentucky."

The children now began to gather about him, seating themselves at his feet.

“To this little town Aaron Burr came to hatch his conspiracy, for he was joined here by General Wilkinson and many others of high repute, whom I might name. I must do them the justice to say, however, that I do not believe that these men realized the extent of his ambitious scheme, or apprehended its treasonable nature. That secret Burr kept locked within his own breast. That he failed, was mainly due to the alertness of the youthful State Attorney, Joseph Hamilton Daviess, a brilliant young man, only about twenty-nine years old, who discovered his plans, drew an indictment against him, upon the table I will show you, and brought him to trial at Frankfort.

“The assembling of the Court on the stated day was accompanied by the most intense excitement, owing to the magnitude of the charge, and the prominence of the accused, who had just occupied the second office of importance in the nation—Vice President.

“The attorney could not produce his witnesses,—naturally, since some of them were

said to be involved, and the Grand Jury was discharged by the Court.

“The effrontery of the accused could not have been better shown than in what followed. Hearing of the discharge of the jury, he entered the court room, with dignified mien, leaning on the arm of his counsel, Henry Clay,—whom he had assured of his innocence of the charge,—and inquired why the proceedings had been stopped.

“He then took occasion to address the people, through the Court, in a manner so grave, so dignified and adroit, that no one could withstand the winning and fascinating address of this extraordinary character. Through his insistence, another day was set for the trial, and Mr. Clay again consented to serve as his counsel.

“Another Grand Jury was called; another day set for the trial, and at the appointed time, the little city of Frankfort was thronged with people.

“After a brilliant forensic battle between Clay and Daviess, for lack of a material witness, Burr was acquitted.

“So intense was the feeling of joy over his acquittal that a public ball was given in his

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honor by the friends of Burr. This was followed on the next night by a ball in Daviess's honor, which marked the advent of the first fighting editor, one of Daviess's newspaper friends, who was stabbed by a partisan of Burr's.

"While this judicial farce was being enacted at Frankfort, a proclamation from the President, ordering the arrest of Burr for treason was then speeding by carrier from the capital. His boats were already passing on the Ohio River.

"Later he was arrested and tried in Richmond, Virginia, where, owing, no doubt, to his former high office,—by some legal quibble, he was again acquitted.

"The failure of this prosecution was a very serious disappointment to Daviess. Five years later he raised a regiment to fight the Indians on the Wabash, under General Harrison.

"On the 7th of November, 1812, the year in which I was born, he fell at the battle of Tippecanoe, aged 37, leading at his own solicitation a gallant sortie, of which history says:

" 'He saved the day. He led the desperate charge which won the battle, when everything seemed lost. He received his death wound in

the charge, but lived long enough to know the victory was ours. He was a great man; his name will never be forgotten. His sword has carved it imperishably upon the keystone of our State's triumphal arch!'

"Four States have honored him by naming counties for him. One of them, Illinois, in order that there should be no mistake, has called her county Joe Daviess. It seems to me there were giants in those days. How much of vital history was compressed into his few years. Bring me that picture," to one of his daughters.

Dee had listened throughout with the most intense interest. Great tears were standing in his big blue eyes. When the story was finished; he said:

"Grandpa, I've changed my mind about being a soldier. It's too dangerous."

The picture, an ivory miniature, was brought me, beautiful, and noble indeed, in every lineament. The hair was heavily powdered, as was the custom of those days, accentuating the beauty of coloring.

"He was married, of course?" I asked.

"Yes:—his marriage was quite a romantic affair. He was the first western lawyer who

ever argued a case in the Supreme Court. He went to Washington, dressed as were the backwoodsmen of those days, for a ride through the wilderness and over the mountains on horseback.

“He was a man of powerful physique, fully six feet in height, and lordly in his bearing. He wore buckskin breeches, and a hunting shirt belted in at the waist, richly fringed on both leg and sleeve, but the rude garb, I judge, did not diminish the dignity of his bearing. In his belt he carried the long flint-lock pistol which you will find in there,” pointing to the library.


“Arriving late in Washington, he went directly to the court. Finding his case already called, unshaven and unshorn, he argued it so forcibly that his rare learning and elocution made so powerful an impression upon the presiding Judge—Chief Justice Marshall—that he invited him to visit him.

“He did so, and there he met the Judge’s sister, Miss Ann Marshall, whom he later married, and brought with him to Kentucky three years prior to the Burr conspiracy. He was Grand Master Mason of the State when he was killed, and his sword hangs in the Masonic Lodge at Louisville.

"His name is carved on the tree upon the battlefield of Tippecanoe, under which he lay, with his head pillowed upon the breast of a friend while dying. He was conscious to the last, and recognized and described accurately to his friend all of the symptoms of approaching dissolution.

"There is quite an interesting little story connected with this trial. It seems that after Burr's treachery to his country became understood, even though he was not indicted, Mr. Clay was very harshly censured for having defended him. In reply he wrote an open letter, excusing himself, and stating that Joseph Hamilton Daviess, while a brilliant man, was a Federalist and a man of strong prejudices. So great was his admiration of Alexander Hamilton, that when a grown man, he adopted Hamilton as a part of his name. I have seen that letter under Mr. Clay's signature. In truth, he was christened Joseph Hamilton, his mother being Jean Hamilton, of Scotch parentage.

"Concerning this christening is a story I want to tell you. His father, Joseph Daviess, was a strict member of the Presbyterian church, and a leader of the singing. Like all



of the old Virginia gentlemen of that day, he had his sideboard stocked with wine, and upon occasion took a glass with his friends. On the occasion of the birth of this boy he took several glasses, so many, in fact, that when he went to the minister to appoint a day for the christening, he was surprised by a refusal.

"On the following Sunday he was in his pew, but when the hymn was read he failed to raise the tune. After a few minutes, the pastor asked Brother Daviess to raise the tune. He arose, and in a good audible voice, with a strong Scotch brogue answered:

"'I'll neither whistle nor sing for ye, so long as you refuse to mark the little lambs because the old ram went astray.'"

I thanked the Major most heartily for an evening of great enjoyment, listening to these chronicles of the ancient town. Some of them of course had long before passed into history, but they sounded different coupled with bits of sentiment and character-drawing at first hand.

The children retired, the Major fell into a reverie, and I joined the young girls on the steps, who were busy discussing a basket picnic.

"Where will it be held?" I asked carelessly.

"Down at the Towers, of course," answered the elder sister, and kindly invited me to go with them. "*Everybody* will be there."

I hoped that I might go, and retired to dream of the Towers,—and what the possibilities of such a trip might be, for of course 'Lisbeth would be there.

XVII

A KENTUCKY PICNIC—THE DEVIL'S PULPIT

GREAT undertakings move slowly, and the building of a bridge over the great Kentucky canyon was a mammoth undertaking. I found also that the unwieldy machinery of the law moved slowly, in small matters as well as great.

It was early June when I reached the historic little town. It was now July and I was not ready to leave. Had my mind been entirely at rest, I would have enjoyed this ancient village, so full of interest, and the people so kind and hospitable, but Jack's letters, eagerly looked for, were often disquieting. There were gay doings at Bellevue, for the bridge builders were now gathering there in force, and among them were some very fine young men; one of them a German nobleman. It was not strange to hear that one by one they entered the lists for the favor of the Kentucky belle.

Having mapped out for myself what I be-

lieved to be an honorable course of conduct toward Jack, I should have been grateful to the kind fate which kept me from falling headlong into the pit which seemed to have been dug specially for me from the beginning. But,—I was not. I was sore beset with longings and vain dreams, from which only a visit to my kind friends, the Major and his family, could arouse me. One day, however, there came a ray of light. Jack's letter informed me that the three counties centering at the junction of Dick's River with the Kentucky were planning a monster basket picnic, halfway political, and wholly social.

"We will all be there," he wrote. "There will be a platform for speechmaking and dancing, and lunches will be spread all along the beautiful valley on the river bank. 'Lisbeth sends you, through me, an invitation to dine with her, and join our party in a boat excursion to the Chimney Rock, or Devil's Pulpit, a few miles away, a wonderful place!

"Now don't disappoint us, for between you and me, I think 'Lisbeth is a little hurt that you have never found time in five weeks to come to see her; only a little ride of twenty miles behind a good horse.

... The broad fields of Indian corn now stood in serried ranks, like soldiers with tasseled caps and bayonets and spears, all sheathed in green, bristling and clashing with melodious sound when stirred by even the gentlest breeze.

They had now fine silken cockades, red or white, peeping from the breasts of their green coats, the hardiest and the best, as in the case of gallant soldiers, bearing two or three such decorations, the promise of as many ears of corn.

Nor was this the only decoration borne so proudly by these rustling blades.

From the foot of each sprung a hardy vine climbing upward; twining its tendrils about the sturdy stalk until it reached the top and crowned the tasseled head with a wreath of morning-glories, unfolding, beneath the early summer sun, hundreds of bell-shaped flowers of varied hues of pink and blue and white, upon which the dew sparkled like so many diamonds in the sunlight.

These morning beauties did not crowd out the humbler and more useful vines, which also wreathed themselves about the growing corn with stout tendrils, their long racemes of white flowers already beginning to form into the

slender green pods,—the succulent “snaps” or beans, which combined with the green corn, and seasoned with cream and butter, make the famous Kentucky dish known as “succotash,” said to be of Indian origin, but I am sure the aborigines knew of nothing half so good.

As far as the eye could reach,—between the rows of corn, the bare earth was covered with stout vines, and from the green velvety leaves peeped the yellow blossoms, earnest of as many golden pumpkins, treasures for a Yankee housewife,—from which to furnish thousands of national pies,—incidentally,—their chief value in this region being found in their use as winter food for cattle.

I found all of the waste places now covered with black-eyed susans, and thus converted into veritable fields of the cloth of gold.

The entire road wound through a shifting panorama of loveliness, from which we passed into that rugged cliff region of beauty and sublimity, unsurpassed certainly on this western continent. Not even the famed Palisades of the Hudson could approach it in imposing grandeur. Somehow they impressed me more upon my return to them, than upon first sight, and I found afterward in my long familiarity,

with them, that the sense of their massive proportions grew upon me.

I often spent hours looking up at the towering cliffs, rising from three to six hundred feet from the base, variegated by marble strata of every conceivable thickness and color, wondering for how many centuries the storms had beaten against their bold fronts; how many more centuries they would continue to endure.

Slowly we crept down the face of the cliff, as we had done on that eventful day when 'Lisbeth sat beside me, but we were in a lighter vehicle, with only a span of horses to control.

"I'm glad we ain't got the old engine horses," said Master Dee, the little grandson, who sat beside me.

"Why?" I asked.

"'Cause they's used to running like the mischief when they hear a bell ring, an' if that steamboat was to ring the bell, or blow the whistle they'd just light out, and we wouldn't have no more chance than a rabbit with a dog after it. Would we, Grandma?"

Then "Grandma," explained, that for a great many years, the little fire engine in town had been run by a volunteer force of young men. Tired of the drilling, and "running

with the machine," they had purchased horses for the purpose, and kept them drilled. Fires being of infrequent occurrence, the horses by way of earning their feed, were often hired out for other purposes, but they were mindful of their first duty, and never failed to respond to the ringing of a bell, no matter how serious the nature of their occupation for the time, funerals being no exception.

Having now arrived at the fertile valley running parallel with the river, nestling at the foot of the mighty battlements on the western side of the stream, we found the air cool and refreshing, and fragrant with the breath of many wild flowers. The graceful trees, water maples, and willows, which grew along the bank of the stream, and at the foot of the crags, with rhododendrons, and clinging vines, walled in by these rocky ramparts, presented a scene of rare and picturesque beauty.

The early arrivals had already chosen points of vantage for their picnic grounds. Among these were the Claibornes, and we found the Colonel and Jack waiting to welcome us, and convoy us to a beautiful spot, chosen several days before,—since they lived so near,—and made comfortable for their friends.

"I am so glad you came," said Jack cordially, "and we are more than glad that you brought 'Cousin Maria' along,—and the girls. 'Lisbeth will be so glad. She said right away you must all dine with us. She has gone with Jimmie Dunbar up the valley a piece to get some flowers for our table."

He went to work at once bestowing our hampers in their proper places, and having a comfortable seat made for "Cousin Maria," with the cushions of the carriage, the Colonel standing by, talking with these relatives whom he had not seen for some time, though only a small strip of country separated them.

"Business does not call me over your way often, but now that the girls are growing up, they must make friends with 'Lisbeth. You know how it is with us Kentuckians; we Clai-bornes particularly; blood is thicker than water."

Jack was so busy superintending everything and everybody that I did not get a moment's conversation with him. One would have thought he was sole proprietor. My heart sunk like a lead plummet. It certainly did look as though everything was settled.

Our ground was quite shut in from all the


others. There seemed to be many invited guests, who were just now beginning to arrive, and I was kept busy greeting my co-laborers on the work in hand, and introducing them to the Major's family.

Still 'Lisbeth lingered. I wondered if Dunbar was detaining her, quoting poetry to her, calling her Rosalind perhaps; knowing him so well, I would not have been surprised to find his verses to her stuck on every tree.

"Here she comes!" shouted Jack, as if there were but one she in the world; and my heart stood still because I knew now better than ever before that for me there was but one.

To the left stretched a lane where the trees twined their arms lovingly above it; where the somber twilight had not yet been dispelled by the summer noon; mossy and shady and untraveled, save by the couple coming leisurely toward us. Down this little forest path 'Lisbeth came, her eyes drooped to the velvety turf upon which she trod.

Gowned in pure white, fleecy, soft, enfolding her lissome body like a cloud, pink-cheeked and violet-eyed, a perfect picture with a wreath of wild roses pink as her cheeks, set



upon the burnished tints of her rich hair, Rosalind could never have looked so lovely.

I had never seen her without her hat, unless it was that day on the coach, when it was crushed upon my shoulder and she removed it for a moment to restore its shape. Her large picture hat she now carried upon her arm, filled with flowers. She kept her eyes so resolutely veiled and approached so slowly that I wondered if,—if perhaps in the distance she had seen me, and feeling a trifle abashed at a first meeting after that startling episode upon the stage, was putting it off as long as possible;—or,—or was it only one of the many tricks of a coquette.

“Hurry, 'Lisbeth. Here is Cousin Maria, and we are all waiting for you,” called Jack, with much the air of a proprietor. I glanced at him wonderingly, losing sight of 'Lisbeth for a moment. When my glance returned to her, she was greeting “Cousin Maria,” with great cordiality, and embracing the girls. Her profile was now turned toward me, so that I might look at her unhampered and mark how, closely folded about her, was her filmy gown, defining so softly, but clearly, the perfect outlines of her sylph-like form. The sun was

greedily kissing her hair, her cheek, her throat; also the flowers which she carried in her hands, which now began to wilt beneath the ardor of his kisses.

She turned to me, and beyond a moment's lifting of her eyes, a cordial handclasp, and a few words of greeting, and, perhaps something about the weather, she betrayed no further sign that she was aware of my presence. Turning to the others, with great affability, she made them welcome to her sylvan board.

Her seeming neglect,—under the circumstances, known only to us two,—did not pain me. It seemed rather studied than otherwise. If so,—why?—Why then, I must have interested her in some way; or—perhaps, she was concealing something?

My eyes followed her as she passed from group to group. I think their warmth must have stirred her, for once she let hers rest on mine. I could see the red current sent by her heart to her cheek; and she began immediately to bestir herself about the repast, while her admirers stood or sat around, making silly talk for each other, while my hostess and the girls superintended the unpacking of their dainties, all of them making merry over the feast.

This was a typical Kentucky picnic. A good way down the valley was the rostrum, where the politicians were flying the American Eagle, for this was the opening of the campaign season. Picnic parties were scattered here and there, in every available spot,—pretty patches of color upon the landscape,—the mothers superintending the laying of the tables, while the fathers and brothers not otherwise engaged, listened to the speeches, and the girls and their beaux sat under the trees, or in the buggies, or carriages, flirting; awaiting impatiently the afternoon, when they would have the platform for a dance. How much better than the stupid speeches!

Dunbar and I renewed our old acquaintance. I always liked him, and he seemed to me greatly improved by his contact with the world. Still,—there was enough of romance and sentiment left, I judged from his tender commendation of Miss Claiborne. This did not disturb me, however, cold as her greeting had seemed.

It was not long until the music wafted to us by the breeze gave token of the close of the morning session.

Pretty soon we were joined by Colonel Clai-

borne, bringing with him the dinner guests who had elected to listen to the speeches.

It would be useless to try to give any reasonable account of that sylvan luncheon; of the substantial and dainty viands, delicious after our long ride, and as beautifully served by the attendants as if laid upon the table in their own dining hall.

From the coolers rare wines were brought to give savor to the feast, and delicate ices, so refreshing, were served, with many varieties of beautiful cakes, for desert.

Luncheon over, we all sauntered slowly down to the boat, which had been engaged to take us several miles up the river. In disposing ourselves, I was placed near 'Lisbeth; not by her side, but near enough to hear the murmur of her voice, pitched low. I did not care to talk, for I was again most deeply impressed with the silence which seems to brood over this great canyon of Central Kentucky.

We seemed to be floating upon the bosom of the river, calm and placid as an inland lake. In many places, beautiful narrow valleys bordered it on either side, and rising up perpendicularly from these fragrant borders, cliff rose on cliff, crag on crag, in great semicircles

for miles and miles, as far as the eye could reach, seeming at times to shut us in completely. We were all silent, subdued and awed with the grandeur of the scene. Even Dunbar could remember no rhyme suitable to the occasion, and our German ally Herman Von Stuben could call to mind nothing in his fatherland to which he could compare it.

At length the "Devil's Pulpit," or "Chimney," came in view, rising from the very brink of the main ledge of rock, at an elevation of two hundred feet from the river, and separated from the main wall some twenty or thirty feet at the top, like a giant column, one hundred feet high from its elevation on the ledge, making some three hundred feet in all.

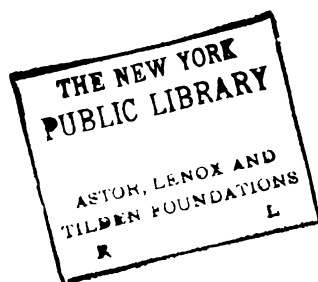
It was not unlike a candlestick with numerous swells and projections in the stem, and was thrown out in strong relief against the background formed of the rugged cliff.

The boat stopped here in order that we might all get out and pick ferns at the base of this wonderful freak of nature.

It so happened that it fell to my lot to assist 'Lisbeth to ascend the rough steps in the stones, leading from the boat. Seeing we were about to land, I leaped from my seat and



The "Devil's Pulpit" or "Chimney"



pressed forward to her side. Placing my hand firmly under her arm, I said in as even tones as I could command:

"Allow me to assist you."

When we came to the turning point, I said to her: "Don't let's follow the others. This way," and I steered her in the opposite direction, where we were rewarded by finding a gorgeous fern bed, hidden away behind a great mass of stone.

"What have I done that I am treated with so much coldness?" I asked. "In what particular have I so offended you?"

"I was not aware of any discourtesy," she answered without looking at me.

"No discourtesy. Miss Claiborne, I judge, could not be guilty of that,—to an invited guest, for such I am, since an invitation from you came to me through Jack."

She did not answer at once, and her hand trembled as she plucked a fern leaf apart.

"You need not answer. I realize that I am so nearly an utter stranger to you that no special consideration is due me. I am simply disappointed. Forgive me."

She kept her face averted, and still made no reply.

"Have you nothing to say to me?—May I not even look at you, after all these weeks of waiting?" I asked with trembling voice.

I waited no longer. I feasted my eyes upon the brow clear and white as if never kissed by the sun; upon the cheek flushing like a wild rose, under the warmth of my gaze; upon the ripe red lips, trembling a little as she stood before me, her dark lashes caressing her soft cheek. Lifting them finally, she asked:

"Waiting for what?"

Ah, the arch coquette, this Kentucky belle, who strung her adorers like fish. A thought of Jack flashed through my mind. I was not prepared to answer this question,—as under other circumstances I would have done,—so parried the thrust.

"Ah, this world's beauty is a priceless boon," I said presently.

"Then you *have* looked at me? Are you through?"

"Not half!"

"I fear then, you are unreasonable," and lifting her hat, she placed it resolutely upon her head, the deep fall of lace which fringed it all around, as was the fashion of that day,

shielding her face completely, thus rebuking my presumption.

"Pardon me," I said hurriedly, "I fear I have been almost rude. I think the Devil himself must have stepped down from his pulpit to tempt me. Forget it, please. We can at least be friends?" holding out my hand.

She laid her cool little fingers in mine, and looking at me through the meshes of the lace, said:

"Upon condition, that by way of showing that you bear no resentment for any seeming lack of hospitality to-day, you will permit me to entertain you as a guest some day in my own home."

I pressed her fingers in token of assent, and stooping down, began hurriedly pulling up from the soft, rich earth, great bunches of ferns, for I heard the others approaching. When they joined us, she had by far the best showing.

"I was beginning to grow uneasy," said Jack.

"Lest the Devil had carried us away? We were right there in the shadow of his pulpit where the most tempting fern beds flourish."

Jack took her fern basket in the most matter

of fact way, helped her into the boat, and seated himself beside her, while I, ashamed of my lapse of fealty to my friend, repentant and sorrowful over the false position in which it had placed me, sat silent and alone.

Would 'Lisbeth ever trust herself with me again? True, she had invited me to visit her—she could scarce do less;—and, maybe, a desire on her part to have me in evidence in her train, as is often the way with maids, prompted the invitation.

At the parting, we shook hands as ordinary acquaintances, and went our ways, I bearing in my breast a sorely wounded heart. It was late before we reached town, and I was easily persuaded to go on to Hayfields to spend the night.

It has been said that those born in Central Kentucky and raised there learn to love it with such intensity that no matter where their pathways in life may lead, they look back to this charmed region with great longing;—remembering wistfully the graceful foliage of the trees, the sighing wind through the rich fields of corn and hemp and waving grain, the songs of the birds, and the lowing of the kine.

Having seen for myself, I could now understand the feeling. I could understand how all these things unfolding themselves like a panorama before the mental vision of the wanderers from the old Kentucky homes, would fill their souls with such unrest that nothing could satisfy them, for a time at least, but a return to the familiar scenes.

After breakfast, the Major returned of his own accord to our conversation of a few days before, and I found it no difficult matter to obtain from him another story of historic importance.

“You passed near a spot of national interest yesterday. I think I told you that on the return of Clark’s soldiers from the West, many of them found their lands parceled out

to old soldiers of the Revolution. Of course legal complications arose and thereby hangs an interesting tale.

“The difficulties arising out of these different land claims brought lawyers into this part of the country in dozens. Now,—on this circumstance hangs a true tale, which I will guarantee you have never seen in print. An episode which stirred the nation to its profoundest depths, and served to disrupt a Presidential Cabinet.”

“This sounds interesting,” said I, settling myself deeper in my chair in anticipation of a good story.

“Over yonder in the Cane Run neighborhood, about four miles east of the town, you will find if you ride that way, all that remains of an old stone house, one of the finest of those pioneer days immediately succeeding the war. There dwelt the widow Robards, as everybody called her; a very remarkable woman, of the best old Colonial type. Formerly a woman of great beauty, as might easily be seen,—dignified in manner; possessed of great intelligence, and good common sense; noted for her sterling integrity, all of which was shown forth in the character of her sons and daughters,

whom she brought with her to this wilderness home, and of whom I will speak later.

“ They came from the tide water country of Virginia, Goochland County; she, a granddaughter of Joseph Lewis, and his wife Sarah Cocke, of the fine old Cocke-Aston-Pleasant families,—a granddaughter of Colonel Robert Woodson and his wife, Elizabeth Ferris, all of them prominent in the founding of the Virginia colony, as you will find by reference to the history of those days. Her husband, William, son of John Robards, a wealthy Goochland County planter, died before the Revolution, leaving five sons and four daughters. All of the sons fought in the war for independence, three of them being officers.

“ The youngest, Captain George Robards, ran away when a lad of only sixteen years,—fought in many of the battles, to the surrender of Yorktown, was at Brandywine, Germantown, Cowpens, wintered with Washington at Valley Forge, Monmouth, Stony Point and Camden. Many deeds of heroism may be found to his credit, and he was promoted four times. His brother Lewis was a Captain and his brother William was also an officer.

“ With their scrip, they took up a large body

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of land over there on Cane Run, built them a log house, and returning to Virginia, sold their possessions there, with the exception of their slaves, whom they brought out to Kentucky, with their mothers and sisters, and they all settled themselves comfortably in their new home.

“As time moved on, they needed larger quarters, and they built a big stone house, one of the best in the county, as Kentucky was then called, being still a county of Virginia. Captain George Robards had married and brought home a beautiful young wife of Huguenot descent, Elizabeth Barbara Sampson, descended from the du Tois, the de Bounets, the Michaux; and her mother, the ‘Little French Grandmother,’ as she was called, would tell to the children to her dying day, vivid stories of the Massacre, on the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, as told her by her mother, who escaped with her parents when they came to this country, refugees, settling at Manniken town. There are people now living who can tell you these stories as they fell from her lips,—her grandchildren.

“By and by, Major Jack Jouet, one of the famous heroes of the Revolution, came to this



part of the country, met, and loved one of the Widow Robards' daughters, Sarah, and married her over there in the old stone house, and I would not be surprised if their son, Matthew Jouet, the finest American artist of his day, first saw the light there. One of Matthew Jouet's sons, George B. Jouet, was killed about ten miles from here, leading a gallant charge at the battle of Perryville; another, James B. Jouet, won distinction in the United States Navy, and was made Rear Admiral.

"Another officer of the Revolution came courting, to the new stone house,—and another one of the Widow Robards' daughters,—Elizabeth, was married to Colonel William Buckner. Their son, Judge Richard A. Buckner, is one of the distinguished lawyers of the Kentucky bar.

"By this time you see, the Widow Robards had five officers of the Revolution in her family, sons, and sons-in-law,—and another daughter had married a nephew of President Madison;—but I am anticipating my story, and have told you all of these particulars in advance, in order to point what follows.


"Not long after the Widow Robards moved into her new house, there came a very hard

winter. Early in November a snowstorm set in, and in the midst of it, a mover's wagon from North Carolina stopped near her place to beg shelter for a few days. This was gladly granted, and the emigrants, or "movers" were kindly invited to occupy the old log house, abandoned by the family, when the new house was built, and everything was done to make them comfortable, when they were installed in it.

"In this mover's wagon was Rachael Donaldson, a beautiful young girl of sixteen or seventeen years, who was of course readily received in the family circle of the new stone house.

"The storm was followed by weather too severe for the emigrants to resume their journey, and the end of the matter was that they remained all winter in the log cabin.

"What might have been expected happened. One of the Widow's sons, Captain Lewis Robards, fell in love with the pretty stranger, and when the winter broke, and spring came on, they were married. When the wagon resumed its journey, she was left behind, an inmate of his mother's home, to keep company with his sisters.



"All went well, until one night there rode up to the door a young man craving hospitality for the night, which was readily granted, for in those days as now, in every Kentucky house, the latchstring hung outside. They found him agreeable, clever, bright and entertaining; a whiff from the outside world, which they all enjoyed.

"He had business in the neighborhood; was one of the many lawyers brought here by the litigation over land claims, and he was most kindly invited to make their house his home while in the vicinity, an invitation gladly accepted by him, and he spent a week, perhaps more, with these hospitable people, then went on his way back to Tennessee, whence he came.

"Summer came on apace, and the clever young lawyer came once more, knocking at the door of the hospitable home, where he was again welcomed.

"One fine day Lewis Robards, returning from the fields, found his wife absent. At first he thought nothing of this, but when evening came on, and she returned not, he began investigations, which pointed to the conclusion that she had flown, and with her their guest, the young lawyer.

"Summoning one of his trusty young slaves,—'Pleasant,' named for the family from which his mistress came,—he started out in pursuit, and finally came upon them near the Tennessee border, but they had crossed the river before him, and had the boat with them on the other side. He was, therefore, forced to abandon the chase, but old Pleasant, with whom I have talked, often told me he sent two shots after them, which buried themselves in a tree on the other bank."


"And this young lawyer was?"

"Andrew Jackson, later the hero of New Orleans, and President of the United States. Jackson took her to Nashville, and from there South, where he married her."

"Did Robards let the matter drop there?"

"Robards made no further effort to recover her, and not until two years later did he apply for a divorce. You can see the application on file in the old clerk's office in Harrodsburg; it has been thumbed by many curious visitors, for the cause is given in plain terms, and Andrew Jackson named as correspondent."

"The divorce was promptly granted by the Virginia court, Kentucky still being a dependency of the mother State; then, according to



his chroniclers, Jackson had a second marriage ceremony performed, averring that he had been under the belief that a decree of divorce had been granted Robards long before."

"This is a very marvelous story you tell me;—and not in accord with the historical records," I ventured to say.

"Nevertheless it is all true, as you can find out for yourself, for there are plenty of people still living here who can give you the facts as I have related them,—and there are the court records, undisputed by Jackson, for no defense was made. The divorce was granted by default. Think of it yourself, unbiased."

"His historians agree that, thinking a writ of divorce had been granted her, he married her. Finding out his error two years later, when the divorce was actually granted, he hastened to repair it, and had a second ceremony performed, and made her a faithful and devoted husband to the end of her long life, which luckily closed just after he was made President."


"That last is true, but do you think yourself that it is within the range of possibility that Jackson, a clever, brilliant lawyer, practicing in the same courts, could have been in error

about the time of the divorce? Having this woman at least under his care, as he admits, would he not have known positively that no papers of notification were served upon her, and if they were served, would he not have defended her? Why did the divorce go by default in the end? Why did he not defend her then? Particularly since the records state the complaint, and name him as correspondent."

"These are certainly difficult questions to answer."

"Simple questions for which there is but one answer. He should have known the fact, beyond the shadow of a doubt, before placing this ineffaceable stain upon his own and a woman's character; a stain which he vainly strove to efface with blood, for it was because of this old story that he shot Dickinson, during his canvass for President. The secret of it is, the Presidency was not even in his dreams then. He was a hot-blooded man, of ungovernable temper, who yielded to his desires, without any regard for others; unmindful of consequences.

"Jackson was a truly great man, and will go down in history as the greatest man of his time. His greatness will grow upon the peo-



ple as years elapse, and this country grows, and the people realize more fully what he accomplished for them in his victory at New Orleans, and later, in his strong Presidential reign,—but like Napoleon's divorce of Josephine, there is a blot which can never be effaced.

“Now you wonder perhaps why I tell you this story; why I do not let it pass as the historians have given it? I tell it because their explanations are paltry, belittling the man, and deceiving no one.

“Many a great man has lost his head because of a woman who had enslaved his heart. Mark Antony,—because of his infatuation for Cleopatra,—in the midst of the battle of Actium, ignominiously turned the prow of his galley to follow her when she withdrew, forgetting all else,—ambition, honor and country,—and thereby lost his kingdom.

“Lord Nelson, the hero of the Nile and Trafalgar, left a like blemish upon his name. History has furnished many others. Why not then come out boldly and say, he loved this woman,—loved her madly, beyond all reason, and his judgment capitulated to her charms, rather than besmirch the character of the man,

her husband,—an honorable officer of the Revolution,—his sisters; and his mother whose hospitality he abused, and whose son he dishonored.”

“Some historian of the future may be brave enough to cast aside the old traditions, and write a plain unvarnished tale.”

“Perhaps. It cannot dim the luster of his name, and would render tardy justice to the memory of those whom his historians have wronged. One of them instead of granting this error of the heart and judgment of General Jackson, strives to gloss it over, not only by befouling the character of the man he wronged, but by representing his mother and sisters as ‘unfit associates for this peerless woman, set like a jewel in a toad’s forehead,’—or something to that effect.

“It is by the women of a family that its status may be gauged. The men may fall below it, or they may rise above it, but the women, as a general thing, even under adverse circumstances, maintain the equilibrium. I have told you of these women by whom she was surrounded. I have told you of the Widow Robards, with the bluest blood of Virginia in her veins, handsome, with a command-

ing presence,—and sincerity of manner and purpose which won for her the respect of all in the little community of that day; of the handsome Huguenot wife of Captain George Robards; of the sisters-in-law,—wives of Major Jack Jouet and Colonel William Buckner;—they must have been the peers of the other sister-in-law, Rachel Donaldson, judged by her woeful lapse of wifely dignity. Don't you think so? Don't reply just now. Examine the records for yourself,—then give me your answer.

“Now understand me. If this were an old story of the past,—forgotten, I would never have mentioned it to you, but it is not. With each celebration of the battle of New Orleans, the orator of the day feels called upon to try to explain away this episode in the life of this famous General. At the last celebration, January 8th, Ben Butler in his speech brought this old story out again. I thought then, and I think now, that Jackson was too sensible of the wrongdoing to have sanctioned this course.

“He was ever a knight errant in the defense of his wife, even to the disruption of his Cabinet, for a fancied reflection upon her character, though she was in her grave; but there

has been never a word of his recorded casting aspersions upon the people whom he so grievously wronged. I do not believe that he would sanction the apologies made by his 'historians and eulogists' of the present time."

XIX

THE POLITICAL POT—A COMMISSION

THE new moon was barely in its second quarter before there came for me a welcome prospect of a removal to new quarters.

The legal business which had detained me in Harrodstown was about settled.

This would now necessitate for me a change of base to the Kentucky River, which would henceforth be the scene of my future operations.

I had used almost these exact words to 'Lisbeth that day on the ferryboat,—and she had said, "I am glad of it." I wondered if she would still be glad?

I remembered that she had qualified this remark by classifying me as an agreeable acquaintance. I wondered if by my impetuosity I had forfeited that title.

I hoped not, for in Jack's letter received just after the picnic, he had said: "I do hope you will be coming over soon. 'Lisbeth seems to like you. I think somehow that you have

great influence over her. She so often speaks of you. I am going to ask a great, great favor of you when I see you again."

"Dear, dear Jack," I said to myself. "I hope it is not to be best man. If so, I will surely fail him."

Since that day at the "Devil's Pulpit" I had almost ceased to struggle with my fate. I had only met that common to humanity, and hoped in time I would be able to endure it, yet,—I was not prepared to stand by and see her give herself to another man.

Meanwhile, the political pot was boiling in Kentucky as it had rarely ever boiled before. The situation was acute, for the gubernatorial election was at hand, and was considered by both parties a pivotal point in the history of the State. The strength of the vote of the colored brother, newly emancipated, was an unknown quantity, and there were other points at issue of paramount importance, which the November election would decide.

The Republican campaign was opened about the middle of August with a general handshaking tour of the State, and was heralded as a grand success.

For the opening of the Democratic cam-

paign, a mammoth old-fashioned barbecue was planned to take place somewhere near Lexington, in the center of the bluegrass region, when the acting governor and other statesmen would probably set the ball in motion with a recital of "Democracy's Blessings"—spelled with capitals—and introduce the party candidates for election in the fall.

It was heralded as the greatest event since the war; and the old-timers smacked their lips as they scented, in fancy, the odor of the barbecued meats, and tasted the burgout—delights unknown for more than a decade of years. The young people were entranced with thoughts of the dance which would follow the barbecue.

Black headlines in the newspapers all over the State announced this "Mammoth Celebration" as an "Epoch in the Party's Annals." The world and his wife were invited—indeed, the whole family, and they all responded with one voice, "We are coming!"

Rates were made with the railroads, and to those who could not afford the expense of the trip, transportation would be issued for the great event. Immediately in every town and hamlet Democratic clubs were formed, and

the streets paraded by torchlight, with campaign flags flying, and such bands as could be mustered into the service, playing with might and main "Dixie" and other equally popular war music, drowned out occasionally by the party rallying cries:

"What's the matter with *our* Governor?"

"He's all right!"

"Who's all right?"

"Our Gov'nor that is, and is to be!"

"Who says so?"

"Everybody says so!"

"Rah! Rah! Rah!" keeping time to the march.

From every point of the compass came the most cheering accounts of the enthusiasm aroused, and reports of excursions to be run from every quarter that day, all headed for Lexington.

Finally it became a matter of question whether the pretty little inland city, with its superb outlying manor houses, and the villages within a radius of fifteen or twenty miles, could accommodate the mighty hosts marching on them.

Then the big black headlines in the papers read:

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"All roads lead to Lexington!"

"All eyes are turned towards Lexington!"

"The Republican death knell will be sounded at Lexington!"

"Republican scalps will be taken at Lexington!"

"Everybody is talking of Lexington!"

"Ho, for Lexington!!!"

And the responses came from legions, here, there and everywhere. Telegrams kept pouring in:

"Make room! We are coming! Five hundred, or, a thousand or so strong—and a brass band!"

It began to look as though there would not be room for the brass bands alone, to say nothing of the cohorts of Democracy.

The old Phoenix Hotel became a veritable political cauldron, for here were engaged the apartments for the Governor and his staff, and for the "gallant and fearless leader of the Democratic hosts"—the candidate for Governor, who would that day open his broadsides at Lexington, and turn his heaviest guns on the common and hereditary foe of the party.

After that "the deluge!"


The Harrodstown Democratic Club was most enthusiastic,—parading the streets every night.

From Jack now began to come daily, urgent letters, "Come over! Don't miss it! Everybody will be here! I will give you the time of your life."

Nothing loth, in fact desirous of seeing this picturesque feature of Kentucky life, I went over with the Harrodstown Club, in order to be sure of catching a few sidelights and some of the enthusiasm. In Lexington, the day before the feast there was a grand rally. Bands paraded the streets as they debouched from the cars which brought them to the scene of excitement, and the shrieks of the small boys and the colored brethren, who followed in their wake, brimful of enthusiasm, was encouraging as to the future growth of Democracy, to say the least.

In the midst of all this excitement, our train pulled in, and Harrodstown added her quota to the enthusiasm.

I managed to slip away quietly to the hotel, where I found Jack awaiting me, with a buggy. He had secured for me an invitation to one of the beautiful houses in the suburbs, and



while we were rapidly driving along behind a span of fine trotters, he informed me that it was a house party we were about to join, "the finest you ever saw! And she is there! 'Lisbeth, you know,—and I was specially anxious for you to come over right now,—about that favor you know I said I was going to ask of you."

"Well now,—really, Jack," I answered, lamely and embarrassed: "I had no idea of a house party. I am such a stranger to all of these people,—it was awfully clever of you, dear boy;—and I thank you very much, but," laying my hands on the reins, "I really think I had better go to the hotel."

"Hotel, indeed! You can't get a room for love or money. Besides, they all want you; they are counting upon you;—most of all 'Lisbeth. You see, desirable men are at a premium just now,—for a house party. They are all in politics."

"But, my dear Jack," I began, my heart fainting at the prospect before me;—seeing Jack's bliss; thrown constantly with 'Lisbeth; I felt that it would be impossible.

"Jack nothing! Now, there's nothing like the opportunities of a house party, and I'll tell

you what I want. You seem to have so much influence with 'Lisbeth. I want you to speak for me,—a good word, you know,—I am sure I would do as much for you,—any day."

"A—a—good word?" The sudden revulsion of feeling nearly choked me. "Then,—then you are not engaged?" I stammered.

"It's this way," flushing redly. "She can't see in me anything but a cousin. It's worse than the sister racket girls give men. She can't be made to understand for a moment that I am serious. Talk for me, Old Man. Talk for me, as you have never talked before. Give me the best you know how. I'll fix it so you will have the chance."

"Do you think it will do any good?"

"Of course it will, or I would not have asked you. You can't imagine how much store she sets by everything you say."

"Oh, Jack," I said. "This is a supreme test of my friendship you are making."

"I know it; but you are equal to anything. You always could do whatever you had a mind to."

"But,—she may think me impertinent. Remember I am almost a total stranger to her,

having met her only twice in my life; and on the last occasion said not more than a dozen words to her," groaning inwardly at the recollection of those few words. Since she was not engaged to Jack, as I had feared, what a blamed milksop she must have thought me. I almost shivered at the recollection of that hot August day.

"Stranger? Nonsense," answered Jack. "You don't know how much we talk about you. She is never tired listening to my old college yarns; and she would make me read your letters to her; said she was so interested in all of the stories you ferreted out about that old town. Stranger, indeed! I really believe you can do more with her than anybody else, if you try.

"Do you know, I think she was really a little hurt that you never came over to see her. That's the reason I wrote you to be *sure* to come over to the picnic. Didn't you notice it yourself,—at first, you know,—that she was a little stiff?"

"Then—then," I said, halting, trying to smother the great gladness rising within me. "Then it is manifestly absurd to think that I would have any influence with her whatever."

"Not another word,—for here we are."
The thing was settled.

The hospitable gate stood ajar, and through a long avenue of trees we drove up to the fine old colonial house, which from a distance, I could see was astir with life.

A warm welcome awaited me. Attracted as if by a magnet, my eyes fell first on 'Lisbeth, the center of the group of fair maids gathered at the lower end of the porch. She was leaning against one of the massive pillars which supported the roof. Seeing me, she hesitated,—only for a moment, however, then coming forward with easy grace, laid her cool little hand in mine.

She was evidently embarrassed a trifle, for she did not raise her eyes after the first swift glance. I noticed the little tell-tale flame rise in her cheek, and—I forgot for a moment, I think, to release her hand.

"Pardon me, Miss Claiborne," I managed to stammer, "I am a very diffident man, and the unexpected sight of this beautiful bevy of girls has unnerved me, I think."

At this, a loud laugh from Jack relieved the situation, then taking me forward between them, I was duly introduced to them all, and

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a little later to my host and hostess, for the late dinner was waiting to be served, and we were all soon gathered around the hospitable board, whence all formality was banished, and happiness certainly reigned supreme for that short hour.

After a generous dinner we found our carriages and horses ready harnessed or saddled for a drive, or ride, in the hazy summer twilight, into the city.

There was an illumination, and torchlight parade, and mimic battles with balls of fire, thrown from hand to hand down the flaming streets, the sidewalks thronged meanwhile with a dense crowd of human beings, singing and hurraing in the utter abandonment to political fervor.

After a while, turning our backs upon this brilliant, maddening scene, we drove in the moonlight over the smooth turnpike road into the country.

XX

THE BURGOUT—GAWGE WASHINGTON—THE
COUNTY FAIR

SOON we reached the woodland, already furnished with platforms and bandstands for the festivities of the next day.

A few cabalistic words from our host gained us ready entrance behind the scenes, for preparations for this bucolic feast were already in progress.

Beeves, calves, sheep, pigs and fowls had already been slaughtered by the hundreds and stowed away in a capacious icehouse near by.

Deep trenches had been dug, about three feet wide, and many feet in length, over which had been placed long, stout poles, elevated on pronged stakes, on which would be hung the meats for roasting. The pits were already piled high with dry wood ready to light.

Deep holes had been dug in the ground and filled with dry wood, and over them were already swung huge kettles filled with water,

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waiting to receive the ingredients of the famous burgout (called "burgoo").

At a long table a score or more of negro cooks were engaged cutting up the meats for the barbecue, interspersing their work with snatches of song, singly or in chorus, reminding one of the steamboating days on the Ohio. The mysterious rites were in full progress.

I say mysterious, for there are certain time-honored *chefs* who tell no man exactly what condiments they use in the preparation of the savory meats, or what cabalistic spells they mutter over the bubbling, boiling kettles of "burgoo," which transform the homely ingredients into a pottage with which to tickle the palate of a gourmand; the aroma of which will draw a statesman, be he ever so great a genius, or even a diplomat, a hundred miles to taste.

The meats of all kinds, and fowls, were dismembered, cut into bits, thrown into these great kettles—holding fifty or a hundred gallons each,—and covered with cold water, "to draw;" then allowed to simmer slowly in order to extract their juices. Later, all manner of vegetables were added,—shredded cabbage, potatoes, tomatoes, corn cut from the cob, then

the cob thrown in for sweetness,—and last, though not least, “ plenty of gumbo,”—tender young ochra,—for richness.

All these vegetables were thrown into the seething mass with generous hands, for each kettle had its cook, with an extra one; a *chef* of long standing and reputation, Gus Joubert, brought from afar to superintend the preparation of this toothsome decoction, the *chef d'œuvre par excellence* of the bucolic feast.

At midnight, signaled by the crowing cocks on many farms, the fires were lighted and a weird picture was presented, as the dusky attendants, for all the world like fire worshipers, seemed to dance about the fires, flitting to and fro, lifting the meats, and flourishing their knives as they carved.

Others replenished the logs as fast as they burned, until the deep pits were beds of living coals; and they all kept time, meanwhile, to the melodious chant of old-time plantation songs which they sang as they worked.

Now and again the tuneful strumming of the banjo, the well-timed rattling of the bones, and occasionally a noisy double-shuffle came from the younger ones, upon whose shoulders rested no responsibility of “ de burgoo,” or

“de barbecue,”—nothing more serious than “de pilin’ up uv de wood,” or “de totin’ uv de water.”

Whole carcasses of sheep, and calves, and pigs, and quarters of beeves were now hung over the coals upon the racks,—long rows of them. They looked in the firelight like a company of ghosts!

By reason of the great heat, they were quickly seared, and turning constantly, the juices were preserved for the long, tedious process.

The skillful cooks, meanwhile, kept them basted continually with a preparation of butter dashed with pepper and salt, “an’ de udder seasonin’ to taste,” applied freely with large mops dipped continually in a kettle of the “seasonin’.”

The drippings from this process, falling upon the coals, helped feed the fires, and produced such delicious odors that even the denizens of the illuminated city behind us were made aware that the barbecuing was begun.

Meanwhile, with an improvised orchestra, made up from “de wood carriers,” the younger members of our party, by the light of the moon and the flaming torches,—quickly

fashioned and held by the "toters of de water,"—had an impromptu dance.

A dusky crowd of helpers, regardless of political affiliations, crowded about the platform, and patting in unison with the music, called the figures of the dance just as in the antebellum days. An old darky, standing near by, his hair grizzled with the frosts of years past and gone, drew his shirt sleeve across his eyes, and said to me in a tremulous voice:

"I 'clar ter gracious, Massa, ef dis ain't like de ole times 'fore de wah, when de young Massas an' de young Misseses would come down to de barn flo' fur a dance, an' de niggahs would stan' by an' pat 'Juba.' Den dey'd ax fur Uncle Gawge, an' I'd jump up on a bar'l in de corner an' chay, chay, chay on my ole fiddle."

Suiting the action to the words, he drew his hand back and forth over his bent arm, fingering meanwhile, an imaginary violin.

"'Twell I'd git de 'spiration an' play faster-'n faster-'n till dey'd all holler out:

"'Stop, Uncle Gawge!' an' young Massa would say, 'I b'lieve de debil gits in your fiddle sometimes.'

"An' I b'lieve, Massa, he shorely did, fur I

jes' couldn't stop playin' nohow, tell I fell offen dat bar'l; sho."

Then shaking his head sadly, he muttered to himself: "Hit ain't like de good ole times no more."

"Do you live about here?" I asked, with a view to continuing the conversation while I waited my turn in the dance.

"No, Massa, I lives a good bit away frum here, but not so fur but what I could git here by walkin' an' gittin' lifts in a wagin now an' then. I lives with Mis' M'riar, ober dar 'bout Har'dstown, an' I calkerlates to stay wid her as long as I live, ef I lives dat long. Me an' anudder po' ole nigger—Doctor Possum dey calls him—lives in a little cabin thar. I used to b'long to ole Miss 'fore de wah, an' Marse Willyum."

"And Dr. Possum?" I asked, curiously.

"Oh, he wuz a po' ole nigger what jes' wander'd an' wander'd roun' frum house to house a-tryin' to sell a little med'cin what he make hisself, an' askin' fur somethin' to eat; an' he kep' comin' an' a comin' to Mis' M'riar's, tell one day she say to him, sez she:

"'Dr. Possum, why don' you go home an' stay dar?'

"Hit wuz a mighty cole winter day, an' he wuz all scrooched up over de fire in de kitchen; hit's one uv dem big fireplaces whah you can set in de chimbley, an' yet de cook have room to sling her pots an' kittles widout scaldin' you.

"Well, he wuz scrooched up dar, an' Mis' M'riar natchelly got tired lookin' at him. So when Mis' M'riar said dis, he jes' look up at her an' he says, says he:

" 'Whar is home, Mis' M'riar?'

" 'Yes,' sez she, 'whar is your home?'

" 'I ain't got no home, Mis' M'riar, ceptin' whah good people like you lets me set by de fire, an' gives me sumthin' to eat. But dey mos' always gits tired uv me arter awhile.'

"Den he gits outen de fireplace, tho' he hated to, mightly, an' I hated to see him go.

"An' Mis' M'riar she wen' back in de house.

"Purty soon I heerd her a callin' uv me, an' wen' to see what fur she call'd me; an' she says to me: 'Gawge,' sez she, 'can't you take Dr. Possum in wid you? I'se sorry fur him. De Yankees didn' leave us much, but I can take keer, I reckon, uv dis po' ole niggah what dey drug frum a good home an' casted on de cole worl'.'

“ ‘Course I couldn’ be outdid by Mis’ M’riar, an’ he one uv my own color, too, Massa, so dat is how ’tiz Dr. Possum is wid me an’ Mis’ M’riar tell to-day.

“ But I ’clar ter gracious, I can’t help a laughin’ when I tinks ’bout dat day. Mis’ M’riar’s little gran’chile, a mighty purty li’l gal, ’bout ten year ole, was a settin’ dar, an’ she say:

“ ‘Gran’ma, why don’ you sen’ Dr. Possum to de Damyankees?’

“ ‘De who?’ say Mis’ M’riar, ’stonished.

“ ‘De Damyankees,’ sez she.

“ Marse Willyum mos’ fell offen his cheer a laughin’. ‘Lissen ter li’l Miss Nancy,’ says he, a huggin’ uv her up in his arms. Yer see, she wuz useter list’n ter tales what ’er ole black mammie tole her o’ nites, scrooch’d up ober de fier, ’cause she didn’ have no use fur de ‘damyankees.’ ”

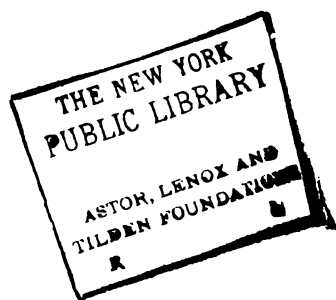
“ I ’clar ter gracious dat blessed chile didn’ know tell dat day she wuz a callin’ dem outen deir name. She didn’ know dat dey wuz jis’ plain Yankees widout any front name.”

“ They had Dr. Possum in jail, didn’t they.”

“ Yas sur; one day, ’bout las’ June, when he tuk to wanderin’ roun’ agin tryin’ to sell



“List’n ter tales what ’er ole black mammie tole her o’ nites”



his med'cin' what he dun made fresh, but Marse Johnnie, he give 'em a piece o' his min' and dey let him out."

Out in the circle of lights made by the fires, flitted the gnomes, prodding and "seasonin' uv de Southdown muttons an' de shotes." The *chefs* of the burgout were stirring the kettles, and casting in the various ingredients. Under the trees, my host and his friends were canvassing the outcome of the election, and on the platform the long-drawn-out Virginia Reel was still in progress. I was patiently waiting my promised waltz with, to my mind, the belle of the impromptu dance.

In the trees the katydids were striving with all of their might to drown the enthusiastic orchestra with their unceasing gossip about Katy.

"Minding me of gentle folk,
Old gentle folk are they,
Who say an undisputed thing
In such a solemn way."

The time hanging heavy on my hands, I turned once more to the old darky, who still stood by my side, entranced by the music, the dancing, and the thoughts of other days.

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"What is your name?" I asked.

"Gawge Washington, Massa."

"The man who cut down the cherry tree?"

I asked, risking the old joke.

"Law bless you, no, Massa. I ain't done a lick o' work sence befo' de wah. I don't has ter."

"I meant to ask if you are the George Washington who never told a lie?"

"Now, who's dun been tellin' you 'bout dat? Some o' dese heyer demmyjons" (demagogues), "I'll be boun'."

"About what?"

"'Bout my bein' 'cused o' lyin' 'fore de church? I'll bet dey didn' tell you I shamed 'em to deir faces!

"You see, 'twas dis heyer way. Dey brung me up 'fore de church an' 'cused me uv lyin'; an' Mr. Moderator he says to me, 'Br'er Washin'ton,' sez he, 'you is 'cused uv lyin', an' dis here congregation wants to hear what you got to say?'

"I riz to my feet, an' I looked 'round at ebery one uv 'em, an' at him las', an' sez I to him, sez I, 'Br'er Moderator, can I axes jest one question?'

"'Dat is yo' priv'lige,' sez he to me, sez he.

“ ‘Well, I jis’ wants to ax eb’ry one in dis heyer house, brederin an’ sisterin, is der ary one uv you what ain’t broke dat bery same Comman’ment?’ an’ I looked him square in de eye, ’cause I knowed him to be a liar frum way back.

“ ‘Does you means me, Br’er Washin’ton, does you means me?’ he asts, straightenin’ hisself up.

“ ‘I don’t mean nobody in pertikler. I jest means to ast if ary one uv dis here congregation neber told a lie; ’specially,—when dey wuz in a tight place?’

“ Nary one uv ’em said a word, an’ byme’by dey all begun to sneak out, an’ dat wuz de las’ uv dat foolishness.”

“ You don’t understand, Uncle. I was speaking of George Washington, the father of his country. You will hear about him tomorrow if you listen to the speeches.”

“ I ain’t nobody’s daddy. De wah tuk all uv my chillen, an’ my ole ooman she jes’ grieve herself to death; my son an’ his boys all went to de wah an’ nebber cum back, an’ dey ain’t nobody lef’ but me; an’ ole Mis’ she sees dat I don’ want fur nothin’, an’ I looks out fur her.

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"I jes' fotch dis along, unbeknownst to her, to carry back a taste o' de burgoo;" and he drew from his capacious pocket a silver tankard, with initials and crest upon it—folded within a snow-white napkin. Just how he meant to carry it safely upon his homeward journey I could not tell.

"You see, we ain't had no barbecue an' no burgoo sence afore de wah, when we had de big 'fairs,' what tuk de place, fur de demmy-jons gethered thar like buzzards over a kyar-kas, to make deir speeches an' talk deir polly-ticks.

"An' ole Mis' an' all uv de Misseses had deir great big dinners. De tables, great long ones, spread out under de trees an' trimmed wid flowers an' pyr'mids; de silver was jis' a shin-in'; an' dey even tuk deir stoves out an' cooked de dinners under de trees; baked de ducks, an' roas' de pigs, an' fried de chickens, an' made corn puddin's, an'—an' what not? Den dey would bring on de udder tings, de iced cakes, an' de ice cream, an'—an'—all de udder tings what I disremembers.

"An' me an' all de yudder niggahs had on white jackets an' white gloves an' sarved de dinnahs. De young Misses and Marsters

would set in de kerridges out under de trees an' cote.

"Marse would take de genneman down to whah he had de ice, an' de mint, an' all de fix-in's, likewise de sugar, an' dey would drink deir juleps an' tell jokes.

"Mis' M'riar an' de ladies would go back to de t'eater an' look at de quilts, an' de cakes, an' de jelly what tuk de blue ribbin, an' when dey wuz all gone den us niggahs would fall to, an' we fit dem perwisions, de shotes an' de saddle o' Southdown mutton, wid wine sauce—what wuz left uv 'em—scandalous! Dat wuz de way de quality acted dem days. I 'members onc't when Mis' M'riar sent out invites to de quality all ober Kintucky, an' dey cum too. Marse John Crittenden, what was in de Senate, brung his secon' wife, what he had jis' marry, along; de widder Ashley, as useter be. Lan' sakes, but she wuz a powerful good-look-in' ooman; and de fines' cloes you ebber set eyes on. I'll declar' de people couldn' eat fur lookin' at her.

"Oh, Massa, dem wuz good ole times; dey'll nebber cum back, leastways fur de niggahs," and a tear glistened in the old man's eyes at the recollections.

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"'Twas dis heyer pitcher, Massa, what made me tink uv all dese tings what I tole you 'bout; all de udders wuz stole.

"Dis one wuz a premyum. I took it fur ole Massa myself," he said proudly, polishing it meanwhile on his sleeve.

"Hit wuz on his two-year-ole, one uv Blue Bonnet's colts, an' when dey tied de blue ribbin on him—jes' 'bout de same blue as young Misses' eyes—I wuz de proudest niggah eber you see.

"I jes' natchelly fell offen his back in a fit, an' I flung my ole hat up in de air, an' I jes' walked on my han's, an' turned summersets all de way to de gate. I wuz nothin' but a boy den, an' de stable boy had to take him out with a wreath of roses roun' his naick.

"He was shot outen frum under one uv de young Massas at Perryville, an' when I heerd it, I jes' slip dis heyer pitcher out an' bury it, nobody know whar, 'ceptin' me an' ole Mis', an' I tell her 'cause I don't know what mout happen in dem onsartin times."

XXI

MOONLIGHT AND LOVE—THE BARBECUE

THE Virginia reel came to an end; my waltz was due. Slipping a coin into the old man's hand, I sent him to bring me my buggy, while I sought out 'Lisbeth. I found her sitting in the shadow with Jimmie Dunbar, who was just saying:

"One stands beside,
Whose love in all its fullness is thine own."

I was sorry to interrupt him, but the languorous strains of the Blue Danube were just beginning, and that waltz was mine. I had been patiently waiting for it, and—she seemed not unwilling when I held out my hand to lead her on to the platform, whither several couples had preceded us. Neither of us spoke.

The happiness of holding her in my arms once more was so great that it robbed me of speech. I yielded to the exquisite charm of her presence, as a man who has struggled vainly against a narcotic, then sinks helplessly under its influence.

The strength for which I had been fighting during the past two months was all gone.

Jack was mistaken when he said I could do whatever I set my mind upon. Here I had proved a miserable failure. I could not give up 'Lisbeth.

The waltz was over, and we all left the platform to return to our abiding places.

The order of going back had been changed. I was hardly surprised when I found I was to accompany Miss Claiborne, for Jack was master of ceremonies.

"This is to be my chance," I said to myself grimly, giving my arm to 'Lisbeth to lead her to the buggy, which I saw my old man had in tow off in a little patch of moonlight.

'Lisbeth was surprised, I think, for having come with Jack, she expected naturally to return with him. She was quite silent as I helped her into the buggy. Where were all the little coquetries and smiles, which I had seen exercised upon the other men in the dance. Taking the reins from the old darky's hand, I was ready to drive, when he called out to me:

"Take keer o' yerself, young Massa, an' uv de young Missie too, as I see you will," chuckling, "an' Gawd bless you bof," his kindly old

blessing following us as we drove through the fantastic shadows cast by the moonbeams sifting through the trees. Leaving behind us the toilers, basting and turning their meats and piling up the wood on the fires, and stirring up the burgout for the morrow's barbecue, we drove away.

It was a pretty sight. Overhead the broad green leaves were shimmering, rustling, sighing; through them the moon was peeping, flecking the greensward, over which we noiselessly bowled, with silver. Pretty soon we turned from the woodland on to the turnpike, where the moon shone upon us, unfettered by the intervening leaves.

"I so love the moon!" exclaimed 'Lisbeth, chiefly for want of something else to say.

"It has been hanging over my right shoulder, every night since it came," I answered,—probably for the same reason.

"So it has over mine. I am always very particular about that."

"Then I should say we have every right to look for good luck."

"You think of such things too? I did not suppose that anyone thought so much of the moon as I. It always seems to me like the face

of a friend," she continued, in a nervous way, as if afraid to let silence fall between us.

"I must confess that I, too, have been studying her face, since I first saw you. It was just about entering the third quarter, then as now, I remember, and I don't know but I've been foolish enough to confide my secrets to her. You, however, have had Jack, consequently no need to consult with the moon," I said, trying hard to make an opening for my task.

"Yes,—sometimes, not always. When Jack grew troublesome I sent him away."

"Poor fellow!—to be sent away, and by you!"

"Oh, he doesn't mind! He's quite used to it; only a cousin, you know!"

"So am I a cousin."

"But a very, very far-away cousin, not the same thing at all. Jack is quite like I imagine a brother would be."

"You know well enough Jack loves you," said I, bracing myself for the supreme effort.

She lifted her eyes, clear, serious eyes now, though well versed in laughter, in tenderness and coquetry. She is wondering what Jack has said to me to occasion this remark.

"You know he loves you with all the depths of his nature. Not at all like a cousin."

"He thinks so, perhaps," a little incredulous smile playing about the corners of her mouth.

"I know that he does. He thinks of nothing else. He had told me all about you before I ever knew you. You ought to listen to him; give him a fair hearing." I answered, putting all of the warmth possible in my plea for Jack.

She was evidently surprised and did not answer at once.

"Are you Jack's messenger?" she finally asked.

Her voice sounded cold, and there was a little tremor in the arm which lay so close to mine that I could feel its warmth. I could see that for some reason she was greatly agitated; offended perhaps, as she had every reason to be, at my plain speaking.

"Forgive me, I should not have taken so great a liberty. Somehow with you, I am always making blunders. I am very sorry."

"Not more so than I," she answered, the flush dying out of her cheek, leaving her very pale in the moonlight.

"But,—you have not said that you forgive

me. You would if you knew all,—how hard, how cruel this task has been. Remember Jack is my friend.”

Her eyes were now downcast, and I thought there were unshed tears upon the dark-fringed lashes.

“I will try to remember,” she said finally.

For the space of ten minutes, perhaps—it seemed like an hour—we rode on in silence. She was deeply grieved. At the sight of her tears, I was weak, spellbound. I could hardly find words at all, and those that came at last, had better been left unsaid. Laying my hand upon hers, I said:

“’Lisbeth, from the first moment I saw you, I loved you, not as other men love, for I had seen many women. You were the first to stir the sluggish blood in my veins and set my heart to beating, in a way never before known to me.

“That day upon the cliff, when I thought we would be dashed to death together, I hardly cared for my life, if death came to us together. Since that day I have felt that life without you would not be worth the living; and yet—I knew even then, there was nothing for me but to give you up.

“Jack had confided his secret to me after I

had seen you, but before I ever met you. It was too late then. There was but one honorable course left open to me, and that was to stay away from you. I remained away in order that I might learn to forget you; for this reason I was deaf to your kind invitations, but to no purpose, as I knew the first moment I saw you again at the picnic.

"When I spoke to you there, I believed you to be engaged to Jack, and only meant to ask that we might be friends. I came here, not knowing of your presence, and have allowed myself to be persuaded to take upon myself the office of a 'go-between,' for my friend. It was madness, and I deserve your scorn."

She had withdrawn her hand from mine, and was leaning back upon the cushion with eyes almost closed; pained and silent.

"Won't you forgive me for loving you unbidden," I asked. "The thing is done and cannot be undone. It can do you no harm. It will do Jack no harm, for it is an honest, wholesome love, that can hurt no one but me. And it shall not harm me, dear. I will be all the better for having loved you."

She lifted her eyes to the sky, to the friendly face of the moon, of which she had been talk-

ing; to the stars, twinkling undisturbed in their mighty course. They were used to such scenes perhaps.

The heavy dews of the late summer night fell upon her, dampening her hair, and her soft summer gown. She shivered a little, and I drew her light shawl up around her shoulders. For the moment my arm was around her, I could scarce resist the impulse to draw her to me and end it all right there,—for weal or woe.

“Is this to be the last of it, 'Lisbeth?” I asked, in a voice scarcely above a whisper; all of my good resolutions scattering like the mists in the valley when the sun shows his face above the hilltop.

Her eyelids drooped; her hands toyed nervously with the fringe of her shawl. There was no immediate answer, and in this delay I found hope.

“This is all so strange; so sudden. I do not understand myself; I do not understand you, and I do not think you understand me. Let us not speak of this again until we know each other better; until—until——” she hesitated.

“I can wait. I can learn to understand you. At least let me see you sometimes, unless you

are going to try to learn to care for Jack,—that is, if you do not care for him already.”

“Hush,” she answered gently. “You must never speak like that again. Let Jack speak for himself.”

“Forgive me, ’Lisbeth.”

We had now reached the gate. “Why may we not lengthen our drive a little,” I asked, loth to end it all this way.

“Why should we?” she asked in low even tones.

We turned in at the open gate. “After we leave here to-morrow, may I hope that sometimes I may at least see you again?”

We were now at the door. Laying her hand in mine as she stepped from the buggy, she answered:

“Perhaps,”—and disappeared within the doorway.

She was scarcely gone when Jack joined me, so eager was he to hear the result of my mission.

“I spent a bad hour, my boy,” I answered. “I knew she would think me impertinent:—me, a stranger almost! I don’t know how you came to think I had any influence with her.”

"And she did not give you a hint of her mind?"

"I candidly do not believe she gave it a moment's consideration after I got off my speech for you. She was so surprised that I would lend myself to such a scheme, I believe she thought I was crazy. You will have to speak for yourself."

Jack was terribly disappointed in the result of my mission I could see,—though he said nothing. I thought best to add: "As for myself,—I have not even the promise that I shall ever see her face again. For some reason, she seemed unaccountably grieved that I should have taken upon myself the responsibility of speaking for you."

Jack held out to me his hand, which trembled in my clasp. "I thank you, Old Man, and I'm awfully sorry that she took it that way. She's so high-spirited, you know. The *highest* spirit you ever saw."

And so we separated for the night.

On the following day the sun rose from its couch in the east, with only a filmy drapery of clouds veiling the brightness of his rising. It was an ideal day for the feast.

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The thermometer, which during August had frolicked with the nineties, had considerably dropped to the seventies, and a fresh breeze had sprung up from the south.

We were all astir quite early, despite our late hour of retirement, as was everybody for many miles around.

All roads did indeed seem to lead to Lexington, and by six o'clock all good Democrats were astir. In companies of tens, and twenties, and fifties; on foot, on horseback, in buggies, in wagons and carriages, they wended their way thitherward by turnpike, or through winding woodland ways to the appointed place, where many were already camping, talking more of "burgoo" than of the many grave topics then disturbing the State and nation.

By nine o'clock the roads were congested with campaign clubs, which, with banners flying, and bands of music and singing, were escorting the heroes of the day to the barbecue.

Around the platform carriages were drawn up, the tops turned back, and in them were the beautiful women for which the blue-grass region is famous. They moved their fans like the wings of gay-plumaged birds, as they laughed in musical rhythm and chatted with

the gallants, fine specimens of Kentucky manhood, who, with bared heads and old-fashioned Kentucky courtesy, visited from carriage to carriage, making engagements for the ball which was to follow.

With a crash of music, a blare of trumpets and the rattling of drums, almost drowned by the roar of human voices, the leaders of the campaign were escorted to the platform amidst the greatest enthusiasm.

The crowds were waving their hats and cheering lustily, the ladies standing in their carriages waved fans and handkerchiefs, and all of the bands, with one concerted effort were playing "Dixie."

Quiet was restored at length, and in deepest silence the speech-making began.

The multitude, as one person, listened breathlessly to the utterances of eloquent lips which expounded Democratic doctrines, upon which were cleverly built the hopes and aspirations of Kentuckians.

The leaders were all there: Men who had made the State famous by deeds of heroism and worth; men who had fought bravely in days gone by for their party and their homes; sons and grandsons of the heroes of '76, who


fought for their country and liberty, then planting themselves in the wilderness of "Transylvania," made it blossom as the rose.

Battle songs were sung by the boys. The bands played while the Democratic standard was planted so firmly in Democratic soil that after three decades it is still flying.

At twelve o'clock the burgout, "seasoned to de Queen's taste," and cooled, was ready for everyone to dip into with the bright tin cups with which they were provided, and invited to "help deirselves." The meats, "done to a turn," had been lifted from the racks and laid upon improvised tables, where they were carved into bits of convenient size and laid upon generous slices of bread, which filled many baskets, and handed out to the multitude.

Kegs of beer and barrels of lemonade were served *ad libitum*, and in many private carriages were found hampers bountifully provided with such delicacies as were relished by the gentler sex. Champagne and other vintages flowed in fashionable quarters, and certain well-known Kentucky beverages flowed in others.

"Ah, this is a day long to be remembered,"



concluded the old politician, drinking to the memory of those other days in a julep compounded by a rare mixer of drinks and handed around for the little company under the broad spreading oak, "to pledge anew their support to Democracy."

The barbecue had lost its savor for me. I did not carry my heart upon my sleeve, however; I visited from carriage to carriage with Jack, even passing the compliments of the day with Miss Claiborne, a dozen other men standing around to do the same thing.

She bore no trace of any recollection of the events of the evening before, but after all was over, and farewells were in order, holding out her hand to me, openly and frankly, she said:

"I believe, Mr. Conway, you are under an old promise to my father to visit us at Bellevue. I hope since you will now be so near us, that you will redeem it."

"Thank you, Miss Claiborne, I have not forgotten my promise. I need not assure you that I will take great pleasure in redeeming it," clasping her extended hand in mine.

"Then it is *au revoir*?"

"*Au revoir*," I answered.

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How pretty she was, standing in the leafy dimness of the century-old trees, where the birds sang above her head, and the violets at her feet encompassed her with their fragrant breath; lending to her eyes their own heavenly blue. They seemed more luminous to-day, as if in their depths there burned a smouldering flame, and on her cheek bloomed the delicate pink of a hothouse rose, while her lips had stolen their carnation from the pinks. And the jaunty fashion of her pale pink gown, with its ruffles of fine lace; and her gay poke bonnet decked with red roses, like those she carried on her arm: I had never seen her thus.

And so we parted, with Jack standing by holding her wraps.

He was taking her home!

As for me?—I returned to Harrodstown with the boys, and with the brass band. One would have supposed that I was returning a conquering hero.

In truth there was a little inward glow of satisfaction, of elation, entirely independent of the brass band, and the excitement of the boys,—born of I know not what,—yet this feeling of well-being accompanied me all the way back.

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Why not? I had met my chief in Lexington, and was advised to move my quarters nearer the bridge, since active work would begin early in October.

With Jack out of the running what blissful possibilities lurked in propinquity.

XXII

A KENTUCKY POTLUCK DINNER

HAVING received this welcome news from my chief, I lost no time the morning following my return from Lexington in packing up my belongings preparatory to an early departure from Harrodstown, though I had several days to spare.

This accomplished, I started out for a farewell visit to the Major and his wife. I found him in his accustomed place in the front porch, which was bestrewn with the daily papers, from which he had been gleaning the latest news.

"Come right in. Come right in," was his cordial greeting from afar. "I am here all by myself. 'Mis' Maria' and the children in town; not a soul to talk to."

"An unhappy condition truly, and I am very sorry to find them absent, since I am here to bid you all good-by, and thank you for your many kindnesses to me."

"Going away?—Come here, Henry, and

take Mr. Conway's horse," to the houseman, who just then appeared at the doorway. "You are going to spend the day with us. My wife will soon be home, and will, I know, insist upon your taking 'a potluck dinner' with us. You know what a 'potluck dinner' is?"

"I have an idea, and have enjoyed your hospitality often enough to know that any Kentucky dinner is good enough for anybody."

"Sit down here, and while we wait for Mis' Maria, I'll tell you about one of our potluck dinners;—then we will try one, and spend the afternoon in talk."

"That is exactly what I would like. Nothing could be better. Now about the dinner?"

"My wife was calling at The Springs one day, about 1850, and found there some relatives, who had just arrived from Nashville. As they contemplated a short stay, she invited them for dinner on the following day, and they accepted.

"She came home in a great state of excitement. They were very rich and fashionable people, and never having seen them before, she naturally wished to make a good impression.

"'That is all right,' I said. 'Now just

calm yourself, my dear. I understand all of the nervousness of a young housekeeper under fire,—so I'm going to help you, and we will give them such a dinner as they never saw before in their lives. We'll give them something to go home and talk about.

“With that I went to the back porch, and taking down the big horn, I blew such a blast as brought all of the hands from the field on a run. They thought the house was on fire. One of them I sent to the field to kill the finest Southdown mutton; carve out the saddle and put on ice. Another I set to killing the chickens; another the ducks, and another was sent to town with a memorandum for everything else needed for a fine dinner, for I was interested in my jocular way in keeping up the State reputation in that line.

“Everything went well from start to finish, and along about twelve o'clock the next day the dining table, all laid out, was a picture to behold. At the head was a fine ham, baked in champagne, and browned in sugar, without which no old Virginia or Kentucky dinner was complete. At the foot of the table was a large tray all bordered with parsley, and ornamented with flowers cut from vegetables,—a cup of

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wine sauce in one corner; a mustard sauce in another, and currant jelly in a third, leaving the fourth for the gravy. In the kitchen was the saddle of mutton, all browned to a turn, ready to be laid on this tray. Roast ducks and a chicken pasty were all ready to flank the pyramid of fruits and flowers which occupied the center of the table, and serving-spoons marked the vacant places which would be filled with the vegetables of the season,—tastily prepared,—and pickles and sauces, etc., etc., too numerous to mention.

“ I had already made my toilet, in keeping with the occasion, which, being a man, was not much out of the ordinary, and was standing with my wife in the dining-room, admiring the general effect, when we were startled by an urgent knock at the front door.

“ ‘ Mis’ M’rier ’ escaped hastily to her room to begin her toilet, while I went to answer the summons, it being early and the dining-room man still freezing the ices and creams.

“ At the door I was met by a messenger bearing a note from the expected guests,— ‘ regrets, that news from home of the serious illness of a member of the family compelled them to leave posthaste for Frankfort to catch

the train,' and they would therefore 'be compelled to forego the pleasure of dining with our good cousins.' The messenger informed me that they had already passed him on the road.

"You can imagine my feelings as I carried this news back to my wife.

" 'Never mind, my dear,' I said. 'You can have no more distinguished company than your husband, and no one who will enjoy the dinner more. We'll bring in the two children, Sister and Johnnie. There will then be only two vacant places,—and somebody will drop in perhaps who will be all the better for a good meal.'

"Unconsoled, she laid aside the dinner-gown she had proposed to wear, and proceeded to dress herself in a simple home dress, while I went out into the porch and sat down to ruminate on the uncertainty of all things mundane.

"I had not been sitting there ten minutes, when looking up the avenue, I saw a fine carriage come rolling over the hill, the spokes of the wheels glistening in the sunlight. As it came nearer, I saw that it was the Governor's carriage, and hastening back into the house I called to my wife.

“‘My dear—here are some visitors, and I am going to make them stay to dinner. Say not a word about the Nashville kin. Just follow your leader.’

“I hastened back to the porch in time to open the carriage door and help the ladies out. It was the Governor’s wife, an old-time friend, and her sister, and with them were two of Judge Rowan’s daughters; old schoolmates of my wife, and the Judge, one of my father’s warmest friends.

“They had just arrived at the Springs and had come for a morning call, while driving, to let us know they were there.

“I invited them into the parlor, looking very sweet with its posies of fresh cut flowers.

“‘We haven’t a moment to stay,’ they called to me, as I went out for my wife. ‘Tell Maria not to wait to make a toilet.’

“‘Hurry in; hurry in the dinner,’ I said to my wife. ‘They can’t stay, they say, but I’m going to make them; that dinner shan’t be lost. I’m going to send the coachman around with his horses. Come in as quickly as possible yourself.’

“I returned to the parlor, reporting that my wife would be in in a moment, and she sec-

ended me ably by following right on my heels.

"A half hour was spent in pleasant chat; then the ladies rose to leave.

"'You surely are not going?' 'Stay and take dinner with us!' both my wife and I speaking simultaneously.

"'Oh, we must go. The children will be expecting us.'

"Taking the hands of the two Rowan girls, I said: 'Now Ann, and Josephine, you can never go home and tell your people that you left my house just as we were ready to sit down to dinner without breaking bread with us. Dinner must be ready to come on the table, and we are very prompt always. You must stay and take 'potluck' with us.'

"I saw they were inclined to yield, but the Governor's wife seemed bent on going.

"'You can surely enjoy a plain country dinner for once in your life,' I said, appealing to her.

"'Certainly I can enjoy it most heartily, and would accept your cordial invitation with pleasure, but I am afraid the children will grow hungry waiting for me,' going to the door.

"The carriage was gone.

" 'You see, I was so certain that I would be able to prevail upon you to stay that I sent the carriage around and told the driver to take the horses to the barn. I was so sure that old friends could not leave right at the dinner hour. Now don't you fret about the children. When they get hungry, they'll clamor for something to eat, and they'll get it.'

"Just then the folding doors leading into the dining-room were thrown open,—and there was nothing to do but go in.

"They were of course amazed, but too well-bred to say anything at first, but as course after course was served, Josephine spoke up.

" 'William, what does this mean? You asked us to stay and take 'potluck' with you, and here is an elaborate feast.'

" 'A feast?' I answered. 'Why this is only a little farmhouse dinner. Every article was raised right here on my place. The fruit and the flowers grow in the orchard and garden; that fence yonder is covered with grape vines.'

" 'But this fine saddle of mutton, and——'

" 'Was a sheep but yesterday. The chickens and ducks are raised to eat; the icehouse is full

of ice, and the dairy full of milk and cream and butter,—all to eat?’

“‘But so much? So many varieties?’

“‘And so many to eat; for what we do not eat in the house, the negroes eat in the kitchen. You see, Josephine—it is just this way. I plant the corn; the hogs eat the corn; the negroes eat the hogs, and all I can manage to do is to get my living along with the hogs and the negroes. There it is in a nutshell;—and Mis’ M’riar there is a good housekeeper.’

“‘It is certainly wonderful!’ said Ann.

“The comments of the Governor’s wife I heard of later on, but they all certainly enjoyed that day.

“The following October I met Ann and Josephine on the street in Louisville. They were so glad to see me.

“‘You must come and take supper with us,’ said Ann, ‘but I tell you candidly, I am ashamed to ask you, for I don’t know what I will give you. When I got home last summer, I told Harney about that ‘potluck’ dinner. She just laughed at me. She said I had no sense. ‘Don’t you know,’ she asked, ‘that was just one of the Major’s jokes?’

“‘I told her it was impossible, that it was

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half past twelve o'clock when we got there; that we heard the horn blow at one o'clock, and got up to leave, and you just would not let us go, and took us right back into the dining-room to such a dinner as I never saw before. I tell you honest, I could not make her believe it was not one of your put-up jokes.'

" 'I *knew* you could not have made it up, for we did not know ourselves that we were going to your house until we reached the gate, and concluded just to drop in a moment and tell you howdy.'

" 'Did you take dinner at my house? Well, now, I had forgotten all about it. I know of course that you spent a day there, but I don't remember that day.'

"That was the natural fruit of your reputation as a joker," I ventured to say.

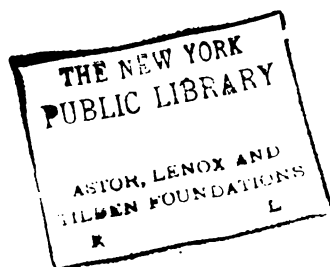
"That was so tempting, I couldn't resist. It was pretty hard to keep my wife silent, and I had to think and talk fast, monopolizing the conversation. I will tell you, however, of a joke that I really fixed up.

"Along about 1860, I took my demijohn to town to have it filled with a certain brand of whisky, that several of my political friends over there about Lexington were very partial



“ Thar’s comp’ny comin’ ”





to. They practiced in these courts; and often stopped to see me in passing. I found that the dealer was out of the brand. He said he hadn't more than a gallon in the house, and in drawing that he found a key in the bottom of the barrel.

"He said he didn't know as that made any difference, he couldn't taste anything strange about it, but he would rather not sell it for my purpose.

"In an instant I saw my opportunity. I induced him to sell me the whisky and throw in the key.

"Not long after, I was sitting in the front porch one morning, when Henry stopped sweeping and said to me:

" 'Thar's comp'ny comin', Mars Will-yum.'

"Looking up, I saw a couple of buggies coming over the hill.

" 'Who are they, Henry?'

" 'Hit looks to me like Marse Johnnie in de fust one, and Marse Jim Beck from Lexington,' leaning on his broom and peering through the tree branches.

" 'An' the next buggy's Marse Brier's an' he's got Colonel Brackenrige wid him.'



“ ‘Run, Henry. Put away your broom and set on the library table a decanter of that last whiskey that I bought and some glasses. And here; put this key in your pocket, and when I call you, come in, and just stand around to wait on the gentlemen.’

“ Henry disappeared, and soon I heard a jingling of glasses, which informed me that all was ready. About that time the buggies came up. I greeted my friends, and hallooed for Henry to hitch the horses.

“ ‘I’ll attend to that,’ said Johnnie, who proceeded to busy himself with the horses. So I said to Henry.

“ ‘Run into the garden down there where that old Virginia gentleman was buried, and bring a bunch of fresh mint to the library.’

“ Henry disappeared through the garden gate, and after talking a while, I invited the gentlemen into the library to drink a little something to take the chill off the morning ride.

“ Henry was there with the mint and crushed ice all ready, but before mixing the julep, I gave them each a little glass straight. They all tasted it to my health, pronouncing it fine; then tasted again, and looked at each

other; I tasted it; smacked my lips a little doubtfully, looked at Henry, and asked if it was from the fresh demi-john?

“‘Yes, sur. I fill it myself.’

“‘It doesn’t seem to me quite the same,’ said I. ‘Do you notice anything, Colonel?’

“‘Well, Major, since you mention it, there is a little something unusual in the taste’; he tasted again,—‘like iron;—from the nails in the original cask maybe.’

“I looked at Beriah.

“‘It don’t taste like iron to me,—it’s more like cedar; maybe it was a little low in the cask.’

“‘You are both right,’ said Beck, sipping it gingerly; ‘but there’s a little something else I can’t make out. I would say a taste of leather, if I didn’t know that was impossible.’

“‘Henry, have you got that little key about you?’

“Henry produced it, a rusty little key, tied with a leather string, to a bit of cedar wood.

“‘This, gentlemen,’ said I, ‘was found in the barrel from which the last gallon was drawn. I didn’t say anything about it to anybody. I thought I would just let you gentlemen try it before throwing it away, and I must

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say you deserve your reputation. What do you think, Henry?’

“‘Dey suttently is fust-class jedges, no sputifyin’ dat.’

“There was a hearty laugh all around. Henry was charged to keep mum, as it was too good a joke to get out on them. Bringing another decanter, Henry was soon engaged in mixing the juleps, which he brought us on the porch.”

“Did the joke get out?”

“Of course; it was too good to keep. They told it themselves to their friends in confidence, and you know the only way to keep a secret is to keep it going. As they were national characters, it may be a national joke by this time.”

XXIII

WE ARE THE PEOPLE

As there was no sign of the coming of my hostess, I sought to draw the Major again into conversation about the future of our country, alluding to our last conversation on the subject. In response, he asked:

“Our future?”

“Yes. I would like very much to hear your views.”


“When such a record as I gave you then is shown of our past achievements, what may we not expect of our future?”

“Certainly nothing from our near future?”

He shook his head slowly, and for answer, repeated a couplet of a familiar old hymn, which he had heard in childhood:

“God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform.

“The recovery may not be as slow as you think. These battle grounds may have been only training fields for what the Great Jehovah has in store for us. From the genesis



of these United States, He has seemed to lead us in a way as miraculous as that of the Children of Israel through the wilderness. I wish I might look into the future."

Rising from his chair, with hands folded behind him, as was his custom, he began pacing the long gallery back and forth, absorbed in deep thought. If he could have looked into the future, he would have seen more marvelous things than those of which he spoke; Dewey's annihilation of the Spanish fleet without the loss of a man; the capture of the Spanish squadron by Schley at Santiago with the loss of only one man; and the fulfillment of his prophecy concerning the placing of the United States among the World Powers of the earth, all within a quarter of a century from that afternoon when we sat upon his shaded porch, discussing conditions which seemed to be threatening the life of the nation, prostrate and bleeding at every pore. Returning to his chair, he took up his theme where he had left off.

"My dear sir, all is chaos now. The blackness of darkness has fallen upon us. We have been led in a mysterious way, but we will emerge from the dark cloud encompassing us,

and our future will be more glorious than we have ever dreamed of,—for, mark my words, ‘*We are the People.*’”

I believe that was the first time I had ever heard the expression which has become a by-word now.

“The People?” I repeated after him.

“*God’s Chosen People.* Listen if you will, to an old man’s dreaming, maybe, for sitting upon my porch here alone, the greater part of the time, while the war has been drifting around and about me, I have had little else to do than dream, and study and theorize, and I have come to some conclusions that will seem strange to you, if you care to listen.”

“Care to listen? I am all anxiety to hear your views upon this momentous subject,” was my eager reply.

“My mother was a great Bible reader, and through her I became an interested student of the prophecies. One day I came across this little story. ‘A great ruler, in doubt, asked his chaplain one day to preach him a sermon in the fewest words proving the truth of the Bible. The chaplain answered, without a moment’s hesitation, “The Jews! Your Majesty.”’ This made a deep impression upon me.”

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"It is certainly a wonderful fulfillment of prophecy which no one can gainsay; indeed all affirm."

"A curse was put upon them, and as prophesied, the passing years have never ameliorated it. They are scattered over the face of the earth; downtrodden and oppressed, they have never lost their identity and are to this day, a by-word among the nations. They are a most convincing argument of the truth of the Bible."

"In proof of which the chaplain's little sermon has been handed down until to-day."

"Yes. I began then to question God's promises made to Abraham; that his seed should be as the sands upon the seashore and as the stars of heaven for multitude. The Jews represented only one tribe, Judah, and a portion of another of the twelve tribes descended from Abraham. This remnant, the Jews, although scattered all over the world, can be located and counted by name. Where are the innumerable hosts, countless as the stars of Heaven, the other ten tribes, representatives of Abraham, through whom the promises made by Jehovah to his servant, over

and over again, *must* be fulfilled, since the remnant had been accursed. They are spoken of as 'lost'; that is impossible. By what signs can we look for them? Abraham was to become 'the father of a great nation and a multitude of nations.' 'The father of kings.' His descendants should be a 'nation high above all nations'; and 'no weapon could be formed that could prevail against them.' They were to be as the sands of the seashore and as the stars of the heavens. Where can this powerful multitude be hidden with such strong marks of identity to betray them?

"There can be but one answer to that question. In the great dispersion of the House of Israel, the ten tribes were scattered, just as the Jews, over the face of the earth. They carried with them blessings, not a curse. They became amalgamated with other nations, whom they endowed with their heritage, and lost their racial characteristics and their identity until such time as the Lord 'sifts the nations,' and those bearing the marks of the promises to Abraham will be His chosen people. If we believe the Bible, these promises must be in process of fulfillment now."

"I think we are taught in our churches that



the promises to Abraham were not literal, but spiritual, and the fulfillment is spiritual, the conversion of nations."

"Why, then, is the prophecy concerning the two tribes, the Jews, literally construed?"

"I have not heard that explained."

"Now, here is another promise in which we are interested; a covenant with David, God's promise to make him 'higher than the kings of the earth.' That 'his seed and his throne should be everlasting.' Jeremiah prophesies, 'David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the House of Israel.' If words mean anything, these people, the children of Israel, wherever they are to-day, must have a king upon their throne. Too many prophecies have been fulfilled for us to treat these lightly or ignore them."

"Of course you have some explanation in your mind?"

"Yes, while I was very deeply engaged studying the Bible, looking for a solution, a stranger happened to show me a chart of the Royal House of Britain. It was a marvelous piece of work, compiled from 'Brittania Antiqua,' Welsh MSS., 'Annals Cambria,' MSS. in the British Museum, Andrews Royal Gene-

alogies, every reliable source, tracing the royal lineage of Queen Victoria back through the ancient kings of Wales, Ireland, Scotland and Israel to King David. If this is correct, then the House of Israel is represented upon nearly every throne in Europe to-day."

"That is true."

"Then, I reflected, Joseph had the birth-right, and to one of his sons, Ephraim, Israel himself (Jacob) promised that from him would come 'a company of nations.' Certainly Great Britain is 'a company of nations.' Manassah was promised 'a great nation.' No one can deny that the United States is 'a great nation,' and I find that these two English-speaking nations control *more than two-thirds of the earth's surface*. If they increase in the present ratio, these two countries, bearing the same blood in their veins, will fulfill the promise 'high above all other nations.'"

. As I write to-day after a lapse of a quarter of a century, I have looked over the tables, and find that the English-speaking race has more square miles of the earth's known surface, and considerably more population, than all of the European empires—including Russia—put together. In the light of these tabulated facts,

the Major's theory is full of interest, and plausible, since those people must be somewhere and powerful, if only by reason of their numbers.

"I have seen it stated somewhere that Queen Victoria accepts this theory of her Davidic origin," I answered.

"You know, of course, that in Westminster Abbey in the chapel of Edward the Confessor, there stands an antique chair, which is always used at the coronation of the sovereigns of Great Britain. Lodged under the seat of the chair is a common-looking rough stone, 'Jacob's stone' they call it. Cloths of gold and trappings of state may conceal it at the grand ceremonial of the crowning of a king, but it is there. This strange prehistoric stone which has become interwoven with England's history is sometimes called 'the stone of destiny,' and it does indeed seem strange that the coronation of a king of England must take place upon this stone. One of the traditions is that it is the identical stone which Jacob used as a pillow at Bethel, and set up as a memorial of the covenant made with him by Jehovah. This seems to me significant."

"How did this stone come to be so impor-


tant a factor in the crowning of kings?" I asked.

"That is a story full of interest, but too long for me to go into now. Suffice it to say, that the tracing of its wanderings shows that it was brought to Brigantia in Spain, in which place, Gathal, King of Scots, sat upon it as his throne. Thence it was brought into Ireland by Simon Breach, first King of the Scots, about 700 years before Christ, and thence into Scotland by King Fergus about 830 B. C. In A. D. 859 it was placed in the Abbey of Scone, in Perth, by King Kenneth, who caused it to be placed in this wooden chair and engraved upon it a distich, which being translated, reads:

" ' If fate go right, where'er this stone is found
The Scots shall monarchs of that realm be crowned,'

which prophecy was fulfilled in the person of King James I.

"When King Edward I. conquered Scotland, he carried to London as trophies the crown and scepter of Baliol, and this sacred stone on which the Scottish monarchs were placed when they received the royal inauguration. He presented these trophies to the



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Cathedral of Westminster A. D. 1296, and since that time all of the succeeding kings and queens of England have sat upon it while receiving the insignia of office. Really, there seems to me something more in this than a superstition."

"How about the Jews?" I asked, interested in the Major's theme.

"The promises are very clear concerning this peculiar people. They will be finally gathered together from the countries in which they first found refuge, and will be reunited with their brethren of the ten tribes and enjoy with them the goodly heritage which they have found in free countries."

"Great Britain, and the United States?"

"Yes, for in both of these countries they enjoy perfect freedom, and unlimited opportunities for advancement. That this is true has recently been demonstrated by a very significant thing which has just occurred in Great Britain. A new peer has been created; the Earl of Beaconsfield, for services rendered the government, by the greatest premier England has ever had, Benjamin Disraeli, a Jew."


"And the Rothschilds almost hold the balance of power in Europe by means of their

enormous wealth. No race prejudice bars their way over there."

"Nor should it in this land of the free, for they have earned perfect freedom and equality.

"Have you ever stopped to consider the part the Jews played in the genesis of this country? Summed up it seems marvelous. It was a Jew, Luis de Santangel, holding an office of trust under King Ferdinand, who financed Columbus when he set out upon his voyage of discovery, not the good Queen Isabella, as we have always heard. It was a Jew, Ribes, who drew for him his maps. His astronomical tables and instruments were the handiwork of Jews. The ship's surgeon, the superintendent, the first sailor to sight land, and the first European to set foot on American soil,—the interpreter,—were all Jews.

"They were among the earliest settlers of New York, and when the war for independence broke out, Washington had no less than three Jews upon his staff. When the fortunes of the colonies were at their lowest ebb, a Jew named Solomon loaned his entire fortune, over six hundred thousand dollars, to the struggling republic. In the Civil War just ended, there



were enlisted over seven thousand Jews, and Commodore Uriah P. Levy, a Jew, was the highest ranking officer in the Navy when the war began, while Judah P. Benjamin was a cabinet officer in the Confederacy."

"This is indeed a remarkable summary."

"Add to it the fact that they are leaders in arts and sciences wherever you find them and you will have in a nutshell the record of a wonderful race.

XXIV

ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND HIS MOTHER, NANCY
HANKS

"FREDERICK THE GREAT, I believe it was, said, 'No nation prospers that persecutes the Jews.' His axiom has been abundantly proven true. Over two thousand years have elapsed since they became outcasts and wanderers from their native land, yet they are still living, growing in numbers; steadily increasing in importance and winning the respect of all governments, while those nations that have tried the role of oppressors, and persecutors, have been humiliated, and many of them dismembered. Is not their story wonderful?"

"It seems more than wonderful; miraculous!"

"While I was studying over the significance of these things, I found in my newspaper, one morning, this little scrap, which may interest you." He handed me a newspaper clipping, an extract from a letter of Abraham Lincoln to a friend, saying:

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"I have mentioned that my grandfather's name was Abraham. He had, as I think I have heard, four brothers—Isaac, Jacob, Thomas and John. He had three sons, Mordecai, Josiah and Thomas, the last my father. My uncle Mordecai had three sons, Abraham, James and Mordecai. Uncle Josiah had several daughters and an only son, Thomas. My father had an only child, myself, of course. This is all I know on the subject of names; it is, however, my father's understanding that Abraham, Mordecai and Thomas are old family names of ours."

"Are not these names significant? Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Great-grandfather, grandfather and father of the House of Israel. Mordecai and Josiah are also Scriptural names."

"And the cast of his features is not unlike the Israelite."

"The elevation of Abraham Lincoln to the presidency of the United States was scarcely less marvelous than that of the shepherd-boy David to the throne of Israel. In both cases it was for a purpose, and that purpose will be fulfilled, at the right time. You know the story of David. Very few know the story of

Lincoln. He did not know it himself, as you see from his letter. He was born near here in Larue County, and he came from the backwoods to be President.

“He did not even know who his mother was, except that she was Nancy Hanks, and that she was the best woman that ever lived. He said so. ‘All that I am or ever hope to be, I owe to my angel mother. Blessings on her memory,’ were his words. She lived right in the neighboring county, Washington, and worked about here, spinning and weaving. There are people living now, to tell about her, and it is an interesting story. His father was a carpenter; that’s all he knew, and yet their son, Abe Lincoln, will go down in history as the greatest of our Presidents, unless you except Washington, and I believe in time, they will both be found lined up in the House of David.”

“Washington by force of arms established American independence. Lincoln by force of arms, and wise administration, made it secure and perpetual. These two men will therefore stand together always as the two great figures in the successful scheme of republican government. We can never be grateful enough for

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the parts they have played in this imperishable enterprise. They will both grow in greatness as the years roll on, and people begin to realize more fully the magnitude of the work of Washington, who made the Constitution possible, and of Lincoln, who made it immortal. Do you wonder that I have become so interested in the origin of these two men, destined to play so great a part in the moulding of God's Universe?"

I wish the Major could have known what has since been established, that General Washington's ancestry, through the Reades (maternal line), leads back to the ancient English and Scottish Kings, who came from David, according to the chart of the Royal House of Britain.

"Well, to return to Nancy Hanks. Her immigrant ancestor, Benjamin Hanks, came to America in 1699,—and it is a singular fact that he bought Saguish Island, first owned by Brewster and John Alden, Pilgrim Fathers.

"The origin of the Hanks family in England is very ancient and full of interest. It is easily traced, for they came from Malmsbury, where Alfred the Great defeated the Danes, A. D. 878. The Malmsbury men were all re-

warded with land, each receiving a tract of five hundred acres, and these lands are held to the present day by their descendants.

“The Hanks brothers were of these Malmsbury men and received their charter from King Athelstane, grandson of King Alfred, and their charters were renewed by King John. It is an easy matter to keep track of them down to the sixteenth century, for they never changed their abode. In 1550 the first move was made when Thomas and George Hanks, with their sister, moved to Stow-on-the-Wold, where they married and had children. The succession from Thomas to Benjamin Hanks, only four generations, is perfectly clear, and easily traced upon the records, without a break to Nancy Hanks. His grandson, Thomas, was a soldier under Cromwell, and his grandson, Benjamin, with his wife, Abigail, came from London, October 17, 1699, to Plymouth.

“There is an interesting tradition in the Hanks family that their origin is even more ancient than ‘the Malmsbury men.’ This historic place is situated very near to the wonderful ruins of Stonehenge, supposed to have been of Egyptian workmanship. The name Ank is an Egyptian word, signifying soul, and

the change into H-ank-s was both easy and natural in those days of 'early English.'

"Would it not be marvelous indeed, if the ancestors of the first martyr President of the United States should have been among the Egyptians, who escaped with the Israelites through the Red Sea, when God led His chosen people by the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night?

"Then led on through ages to the 'Isles of the North,' took root, and from this tree, with its spreading branches, came the little seed, which, planted in the New World, thrived and grew, and worked God's will, as He had aforetime planned from the beginning of the world; that from one of these branches would come the hand that would break the yoke from off the neck of the children of Ham."

"A wonderful story!"

"The Hanks family had large iron industries in Massachusetts and cast in their foundries the first bells made in America. The bell which replaced the old Liberty Bell in Philadelphia was made by them, bearing the same inscription as the original bell, 'Proclaim Liberty throughout all the land and unto all the inhabitants thereof.' A significant fact, taken

in connection with the circumstance that within a short time thereafter was born a son of that household; the man, a President of the United States, who did proclaim Liberty to all mankind, saying, 'Upon this act, I invoke the blessing of Almighty God, and the considerate judgment of all mankind.'

"The great Columbian Liberty Bell at the Chicago Fair, 1893, was also the work of their hands. It weighed 13,000 pounds, to represent the thirteen original States. On that bell was this inscription: 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will towards men.' 'Proclaim Liberty throughout all the land and unto all the inhabitants thereof.' 'A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another.'"

"I can scarcely express my amazement at this story, supported as you tell me it is by the records. How it would have delighted the heart of the martyr President, reverencing as he did, the memory of his mother, and believing in heredity. Now I know, my dear Major, that you have some theory concerning it."

"Yes. I have thought a great deal about it, have read Genesis and ancient history; and will tell you simply what I find. You can

read for yourself, and draw your own conclusions. I find that Ishmael, the firstborn of Abraham, came from an Egyptian mother. He, though not *the* child of promise, was a child of promise,—of the seed of Abraham, to whom God promised that Ishmael, his firstborn, should become ‘a father of kings.’ His mother, Hagar, took for him a wife from among her own people, the Egyptians, and his descendants became very numerous and powerful.

“Isaac, the child of promise, brother of Ishmael, took a wife from his mother’s kindred,—Rebecca,—and he had two sons, Esau and Jacob. Esau was cheated out of his birth-right, and in lieu thereof was promised twelve princes among his descendants. He was left in bondage to his brother Jacob, but he received a promise that he should break from off his neck the yoke placed upon it by his brother. He went down to Egypt, and married his cousin, Ishmael’s daughter, and it is now pretty well established that from this marriage came the shepherd kings of Egypt, and that the Pharaoh in power when the children of Israel were so oppressed, and escaped by the Red Sea, was a descendant of Esau, thus ful-

filling the promise, that Esau should 'break Jacob's yoke from off his neck,' and it seems that he placed it upon his brother's neck. This all happened after many years, and the lapse of several Egyptian dynasties, for both the children of Jacob (Israel), and the children of Esau had multiplied so greatly by this time that of the Children of Israel who passed through the Red Sea there were numbered largely over six hundred thousand persons over twenty-one years of age.

"These promises, you see, were worked out very slowly, but surely. Now suppose that these Anks, or Hanks, found at Stonehenge, and supposed to have been of Egyptian origin, were descendants of Esau and of Ishmael, son and grandson of Abraham, to whom such wonderful promises were made?"

"This is a big and interesting study. I will read it up, and think of it. Certainly if it can be proven that the ancient Egyptian kings were descendants of Abraham, that part of the promise was fulfilled."

"They were very rich and powerful, a wonderful people. Egypt was the cradle of the arts and sciences, which through the wandering Israelites, have been disseminated through the

world. But," said the Major, "I did not mean to preach a sermon. These are only a few reflections suggested by the parentage of this man of destiny."

By this time my hostess and the children had returned. We had the potluck dinner, not such as the Major had so graphically described, but the excellent meal, beautifully served, which one is always sure to find upon the table of a Kentucky housewife. I enjoyed it, and it was with many regrets that I took my departure, bidding good-by to these charming people, typical of the old Kentuckians fast passing away.

XXV

HO, FOR THE RACES!

HARRODSTOWN seemed a quiet little village, but I found after a few weeks' visit, the seeming quiet was superficial. There was always something doing. The people were "heirs of the ages." The love of excitement, of a turbulent life, was a heritage perhaps from their ancestors, who, climbing the Appalachian chain of mountains, planted the first settlement in the wilderness of the Dark and Bloody Ground, "right over there," they would tell you, pointing to "Old Seminary Hill," where Captain Harrod laid out the first town and built the first fort, the haven for Jim Ray after his fleet footrace with the Indians.

First the campaign and marching, and bonfires, and picnics, and much speech making; and a big barbecue out at Jack Chinn's, and another over at Lexington, which everybody attended, taking along a brass band.

Now it was the races. Lexington had not yet subsided from the excitement of the barbe-

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cue before the annual racing meet was inaugurated.

I had no idea of attending, but had been bidding my friends good-by, preparatory to going over the river that week. Under the circumstances, my trip was not so quiet and devoid of incident as I had anticipated.

I found the stage overcrowded, and it was only by accompanying McCluskey around to the stable that I secured the coveted seat beside him on the box. A fair-haired young soldier and a drummer were lucky enough to get seats behind us, with a couple of knowing young fellows, brimful of enthusiasm. Inside, every seat was taken.

Not only was the stage full, but every available turnout, carriage, buggy, wagon, everything on wheels, was pressed into service, and made to do duty for the occasion. It was the barbecue over again, minus the bands, the political excitement, and parade.


There was enthusiasm enough, and to spare, but of a different character. Groups of men were gathered together at every street corner excitedly discussing something. That "something" had all of the earmarks of a secret conspiracy, for no one spoke above a whisper.

Leaving these groups behind, we whirled around the corner, and out Lexington street, McCluskey giving the dejected stay-at-homes a fine parting blast of his horn.

I had not intended to go on to Lexington, but I had not been long with McCluskey before I was changing my mind. No one could have listened to his seductive discourse concerning the glories of the race track and racing in general, without coming to the same conclusion: To miss a good horse race at Lexington was to lose one of the opportunities of my life.

"Thar's whar you'll see hosses as is hosses; sich hosses as you never befo' saw in your life, an' never will see ag'in,—unless you keep on goin' to the Lexington races, which I don't put past you by any means. It'll be the grandes' sight of your life."

He told me of the origin of the races; how a few fine old Virginia gentlemen transplanted on Kentucky soil had first met to match horses, as they did in Virginia as early as the seventeenth century. How these meetings became annual and general, bringing all of the fine horses in the State once each year to Lexington.



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He told me of the magnificent racing establishments now planted all about the little inland city on the finest farms, with stables like palaces; for it had been discovered that there was something in these blue-grass lands, with their understratum of limestone, that produced such bone and sinew as could be found nowhere else in the world.

He told me of an English nobleman, Lord Alexander, who had inaugurated nearby "the finest racing stable in the world, having the finest imported thoroughbreds in his stalls; everything of the finest," as boast all of these Kentuckians, no matter where you meet them.

He told me of the evolution of the farmers' horse show into the race track—exclusively for men, at first, but "you know," he added, "nothin' can flourish an' git along without the women in it, and it war'nt long till they begin to go, two or three of them in bunches in their carriages, which they drawed up to the track 'bout whar the grand stand is now, and it war'nt long befo' they all broke in just like they did at the cattle shows, and now it's hard to tell whether it's mostly a horse show or a woman show—the finest women in the world. They'll all be thar. Colonel Claiborne and

Miss 'Lizabeth, the belle of this whole bluegrass country, and all the rest uv them. You can't miss it; it's the grandest sight in the world!"

Of course, this decided me. I resolved to go. Back of me I heard the men talking under their breath about a "sure thing." At Shakertown they got down "to stretch their legs," they said. I took the opportunity to ask McCluskey what the "sure thing" was they were talking about.

"Well, you see it's this way: Cap'n Phil not long ago saw hitched up to a ole farm wagin what seemed to him like a promising young hoss, an' he bought him from the nigger that owned him for forty or fifty dollars—may be more—to drive to his buggy; you see he's a mighty fine lawyer, an' practices law in all the County Courts 'bout here, and the Circuit Court, too, for that matter, an' needs a spry hoss. Well, he found this hoss a little spryer than he thought fur, an' didn't keer much 'bout usin' him that way, an' the hoss a gettin' fat an' sassy. So his boys, all three of 'em what got home from the war safe an' sound—even though they wuz along with their pappy, who wuz with Morgan, all through the

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war—spilin' fur somethin' to do, laid out a track all 'round that little meadow close to town—what I showed you as we come along—and put that horse in training. They called him Oil in the Can, and them as has seen him says he is greased lightnin'.

“These people are all crazy 'bout him, an' they are goin' over to bet on him. They ain't talkin' out loud 'bout him, 'cause they don't want the bookmakers to find out just what he kin do. They 'lows to make a killin'.

“They bin practicing him mostly befo' daylight of mornin's and they've all been settin' like crows on the fences watchin' him, with their stop watches in their hands. Now thar's a tip for you, an' I don't charge nothin' for it.

“Say”—after a moment's thought, reaching down in his pocket—“of course you're a stranger to me, but I'm gwinter to trust you with this five dollar bill to put on Oil in the Can at the best odds you kin git,” looking me straight in the eye.

Gratified at the compliment to my squareness, I accepted the trust with some misgiving, for I had not much confidence in Oil in the Can pitted against the horses of which he had been telling me. I said something to this

effect, but his village pride was aroused, and giving me a knowing wink, he answered:

"Old Phil can't be fooled. I happen to know he's backin' him as well as the boys. You put that bill jest as I tell you."

Arrived at Lexington, I found the town buzzing like a beehive. The hotels were all crowded, for, as McCluskey had told me, here were people from all parts of the country gathered to do homage to the equine kings and queens of the turf.

Southern people, summering in the North, had made it convenient to pass this way and stop for the races. People from the North and the East and the West were here, and not a few foreigners, for all other horses had gone down in the battle for supremacy before the Kentucky racers.

On the evening before the inaugural race, the office of the Phoenix was converted into a poolroom, for the auction of chances upon the horses. Only favorites being largely dealt in, I heard nothing of Oil in the Can. His supporters stood aside, dumb as oysters, seeking no wagers on the favorites. Evidently they were reserving their strength for their "sure thing." I fingered with apprehension

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McCluskey's bill, which seemed to be burning a hole in my pocket.

The following day all roads seemed to lead to the race track. By eleven o'clock the streets were congested, for every highway leading from the country was thronged with people hurrying into town. The railroads brought in numerous excursion trains, conveying thousands of people—strangers from all over the State and the United States. By twelve o'clock the mixed multitude had all converged into the principal street leading to the track—hacks, omnibuses, carriages and wagons, the negro drivers, all excitement, cracking their whips, shouting, racing, barely escaping running into each other by the narrowest margins. The sides of the road were thronged with pedestrians, men, women and children, negroes and white people, an indiscriminate mass, all of them powdered so thickly with the white limestone dust raised in such clouds by the passing vehicles that one could scarcely get breath. They did not seem to mind it, for they were all eager to get there, and get good places, even if they had not the wherewithal for the grand stand.

A little later the family carriages began to

roll out in a more leisurely fashion, for the occupants had their places secure—either reserved on the grand stand, or in the carriages to be drawn up at the most desirable point on the green lawn to observe the great trials of speed and endurance.

Inside there was a medley of voices shouting; and a rushing to and fro, until the hour approached for the first race, when a hush of expectation began to settle upon the people. Then I had leisure to look around, and mark, with appreciation, the beautiful picture presented in this incongruous gathering from all walks of life.

It was the warmest hour of the afternoon. Not a leaf stirred; not a shadow flickered over the greensward. The sun shone steadily upon the hot, perspiring thousands, seated and unseated around the track.

Naturally my eyes sought out the point of vantage allotted to the ladies. There they were, in all of their bravery of satins and silks and laces and ribbons; filmy white muslins over silken petticoats of delicate colors matching, parasols and fans and gay pattern hats and poke bonnets abloom with flowers of every hue. What a scene for an artist, if only one had

been there. With their frills and their laces and embroideries, they were adorable.

It was not long before I placed the Clai-borne carriage, with Miss 'Lizbeth on the high seat surrounded by her admirers. Sitting there in the cool green light against the somber background of the trunk of a great tree, with her pink frock and delicate laces, and modish hat, and white sunshade, she was a study for a picture.

The horses for the first race having now made their appearance in the paddock, the excitement began to rise to fever heat in the vast throng, for I was in that portion of the amphitheater occupied chiefly by men, and near me was the ring where the money changed hands. For this race I was only a spectator, and had full opportunity to observe with interest, when the trial was on, the red-faced, excited men crowding down to the front rail, or standing upon their seats, shouting, cheering, appealing to horse and rider by name, to "come on"—almost pulling them forward by mere force of their will power, to the finish. Then came the reaction.

By this time the grand stand was crowded. The usual good nature, characteristic of these

people, stood the test well. Women had their filmy skirts almost torn off of them. Sleeves were literally torn out of men's coats, feet were trampled upon; hats were knocked off, but a good-natured apology set everything right. I had ample time to observe everything, for Oil in the Can was not down until the third race.

Seeing my interest, there was no lack of friendly countrymen, and dusky negroes, professing to be fresh from the stables, eager to put me onto a "good thing." Not one of them mentioned my horse.

When the time came, I made my way as best I could through the crowd to a betting stand. Here was excitement. To my surprise, I found Oil in the Can entered for the great event of the day. Coatless, hatless men, negroes, gentlemen with silk hats and kid gloves, farmers were all struggling in the mass of humanity to gain the bookmaker's attention; thrusting their money upon him in fives, tens and hundreds, but not one of them was taking a chance on my horse.

"What's the odds on Oil in the Can? I asked, flushing a little, for this was my first venture in the betting line.

A derisive shout went up from the multitude, which seemed to influence the bookmaker, for he smiled and answered:

"Anything you like. One hundred dollars if you say so."

I kissed McCluskey's bill good-by, figuratively, and passed it up. He handed me down a ticket marked five hundred dollars, saying, "Might just as well have made it five thousand."

"Take good keer uv it!"

"Don't lose it!" shouted the crowd.

"I'll take a few like it," said a countryman standing by, "at a bargain like that," and he passed up five five dollar bills, his hoarding taken right out of the bank.

"Plenty more at the same price," shouted the bookmaker, greatly to the amusement of the crowd. Some more were disposed of before I could edge my way back to the grand stand, and I noticed the Harrodstown crowd slipping around from stand to stand buying up bargains on Oil in the Can.

When I reached a point of vantage the horses were already in the paddock, being rubbed down by their grooms. There were four of them. To my inexperienced eyes,

there was no choice between them. Oil in the Can I singled out by the jockey wearing the Confederate colors. He was a bright sorrel. The others were bays and a chestnut.

Pretty soon the jockeys with their saddles on their arms were weighed, the horses resaddled and paraded to the far side of the course, where they were brought up before the starter, and amid a mighty roar of enthusiasm, the name of each favorite called, and cheered by the multitude. Each individual seemed to have a preference, which he wanted to express in no uncertain tones. I alone failed to speak out, and I felt sorry for the utter neglect with which my choice was received.

This uproar was followed by the dead silence of expectancy, when the jockeys, having received their instructions, lined their horses up, alert for the start, which was almost perfect, and without delay.

One of the boys had a trifle the lead, the others were about even. About fifty yards from the starting point he was well in the lead, the others strung out, Oil in the Can third. This position was kept, the sorrel plodding along easily as they rounded the first turn on their journey of a mile and a half.

Round the first turn, and into the stretch for the first time, the second bay moved forward, taking the lead, amid tremendous excitement from the crowd. They were all running well and seemed fresh and eager. It appeared plain to me, however, that the victory lay between the two bays, for the red and white was still plodding along as easily as an old plow-horse out for a day's work. Keeping next to the rail, the chestnut was half a length behind.

Past the upper turn they kept on in the same order, the two leaders seeming to be getting a trifle the advantage; the crowd applauding, the money apparently bet chiefly upon these horses.

They still led as the turn was passed, the red and white still keeping his place. A group of his friends, I now spied not far away, close to the rail, watching the race in eager, stolid silence.

Approaching the wire for the second time, the second bay moved up abreast of the leader, and a hoarse shout went up from the multitude, each of the partisans shouting "Come on! Come on!" to his favorite. The second bay was now first and amid tremendous cheer-

ing, set the pace for the final spurt for the wire.

I had been leaning forward, tense as any of them in my silent interest. I now settled back, giving up the race. Not so my neighbor on the left, a country lad. I could see him begin to straighten up in his seat, his eyes fastened on the red and white. Just at that moment the jockey loosed his hold upon Oil in the Can, and the colt jumped forward in a flash as if a match had been applied. In a second, it seemed, he had caught the hindmost horse, and in another he was taking stride for stride with the foremost horse, and they were running neck and neck into the stretch. My nerves tingled, and my heart bounded into excitement. The countryman at my side jumped up, as if galvanized, and let out such a yell as almost raised the roof, while "the boys" down below me almost pierced the heavens with their shouts, "Come on, Oil Can." They were now running neck and neck, when Oil in the Can, shooting to the front, as he passed the turn, came down the final furlong still running easy as an old plow-horse down the final furrow, gaining a little, it seemed, with each stride.

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The scene which followed the final turn beggared description. It was like pandemonium let loose. Everybody was yelling and shouting to his choice, "Come on!"

When it was over almost a dead silence reigned, for Oil in the Can had few friends—and they were overcome with the joy of it.

I had the pleasure of a little conversation with 'Lisbeth and her friends before leaving the race track; telling her of McCluskey's luck. I sent a check to him for five hundred dollars the following day.

Both the Colonel and 'Lisbeth renewed their invitation to me to visit them, now that I would be so near. Needless to say I went over to Bellevue soon after I was located,—and often.

XXVI

PROPINQUITY—DISAPPOINTMENT

It is scarcely worth while to make a daily record of the weeks which followed. Two moons, slender crescents, quarters, halves, and full moons found me at Bellevue. Being so near by, it would have been strange if they had not. They had a great deal of company, and "desirable men," were in demand.

The Colonel, despite our differences in political faith, found me upon the whole, I believe, a good comrade.

'Lisbeth liked to have me—her liking manifested in many pretty, sweet little ways, for true to my promise, I had never given her by word, look or deed, cause to remember that summer night's madness.

Jack, beloved of the Colonel, was there, a frequent guest. Polite and attentive to all, and solicitous as ever of 'Lisbeth's welfare and my pleasure.

I could not make out the situation, and

after a while ceased to try. No time or circumstance could alter my feeling for 'Lisbeth. She knew it. Yet gave no sign. I could only await developments.

She was never more beautiful than now. Her eyes had never before seemed so bright, and the flush in her cheek vied with the roses blooming in the garden. Withal there was a certain charming languor in her movements, that whether I would or no, often brought me to her side, as she sat upon the gallery, watching more frequently the men and maidens in their sports than joining their games of croquet or tennis on the lawn.

"Somehow, I have ceased to care for outdoor games," she said. "They bore me; they tire me."

Phil, who was now located at Cogar's, teaching school, came over often, for was he not one of the nine-thousand-and-odd Claibornes? We called him the Professor;—the title bestowed upon him by the Drummer on that memorable ride, over on the stage. Little did I dream then that it was an embryo Congressman who sat with us.

We all often sat in the moonlight on the front porch, watching the shadows shifting

beneath the trees, listening to his stories of the war, grave and gay, for he had passed through many stirring scenes with Morgan and his men. One such evening we four sat alone; the Colonel and Phil together on the settee, 'Lisbeth and I on the steps.

There had been a string of company ever since the races;—coming and going. Now all of them were gone, and like a tense bow unstrung, she seemed to be suffering from the reaction.

"I am aweary," she said, resting her head against the column at her back.

"Had you not better come in, daughter?" asked her father, ever alert and anxious about her.

"I am more comfortable here, I think, Papa. Somehow the house seems close, and I can scarcely get my breath inside."

"Hysteries, I reckon," said Phil,—jesting.

"Let us take a little turn in the garden," she suggested, and leaving the others behind, we strolled down the walk and through the gate into her special domain where the roses were still abloom.

"They seem to have taken a new lease of life," stooping to inhale their fragrance, and

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plucking a few, one rare sweet bud she placed in my buttonhole, standing so near that I could hear her gentle breathing.

"They always seem to come out this way in the fall, after we think we have had the last of them."

"The rose is my favorite flower," I said, remembering that, in my heart, I had always linked her with this queen of flowers.

"The lily is mine. They are so pure and sweet, but their life is so short that one scarcely has time to enjoy them before they are gone."

"They will always be associated with you in my mind. Do you remember the very first time I ever saw you, you had your arms filled with fleur-de-lys?"

"I remember," a soft flush stealing into her cheek. "I had rifled the beds to carry them in to my friends, because I knew they would be gone by my return home."

A sweet verse came into my mind, and trying to recall it, I repeated it to her.

"Then be content, dear heart,

God's plans, like lilies pure and white, unfold.

We must not tear the close-shut leaves apart,

Time will reveal the calyxes of gold."

"How beautiful! I will remember that. Perhaps you will not mind writing it down for me. Mine shall be a lily wedding."

"A lily wedding?" I asked, startled.

"If I ever marry,—you know," was the smiling, coquettish answer.

"That goes without saying," I answered, rather coldly, though my heart was beating wildly; as if suddenly aroused by some imminent danger. "Of course you will marry someone; sometime?" I asked calmly,—trying to restrain the eagerness which prompted the question.

"I don't know, I think,—I feel sometimes that I never will, that my life perhaps is like the lily's. See," pointing to a marble shaft gleaming in the distance, "there lies my mother; but little older than I, when she left me a wee little girl. I am very much like her, everybody says. Who knows what may happen to me?"

A sudden fear assailed me. I recalled her father's anxious care and solicitude about her, manifested on all occasions. How careful always about the draughts and the damp and the cold. In the moonlight she looked as pale as the lilies of which we had been speaking,

and there was a spirituelle look in her upturned face that I had never seen there before.

"'Lisbeth," I said, taking her hand in mine, "you must not indulge such fancies. They are absurd. You are tired and worn out with this everlasting run of company. This all comes of being a belle. Abdicate your throne, run away,—anywhere,—to some quiet springs perhaps in the mountains, and bring the roses back to your cheeks."

My voice trembled so I could scarcely control it; observing this, she quickly regained her spirit, asking archly:

"And throw Jack and all of my eager suitors overboard? In truth," she added, "I am tired. I believe I will run away and leave them all, and when I return, full of life, my real old self, who knows what may happen?"

"You may marry me, 'Lisbeth!" I said, impulsively, quite unexpectedly to both 'Lisbeth and myself. I took her other hand in mine, and with a heart too full to heed proprieties, went on:

"While I thought you loved Jack, I would not speak, but *you* knew, you must have known all along, from the very first moment that I

saw you, that I loved you. Do you know how hard it has been for me to wait to speak to you? 'Lisbeth, you could have imposed no harder punishment upon me than the terms you made for your forgiveness."

"I was beginning to wonder if you would keep your word; if you never meant to speak again."

"Is it not strange how things happen? While we were sitting there upon the porch listening to Phil's story, I was wondering if I would ever dare speak to you again of my love. That was only ten minutes ago."

There was a tender light growing in the sweet eyes that I had never seen before. She had loosed the bonds; she no longer wished to prevent me from speaking.

She was deeply agitated, nervous, overwrought from bodily ills, perhaps, and I saw tears gathering in her eyes. Very gently I spoke to her, as if she were a child, taking both her hands in mine.

"I cannot expect you to care for me all at once. I only ask you to care for me a little now. But,—I believe I can teach you to love me."

She lifted to mine for a moment, two chaste,

serious eyes, full of tenderness, into whose modest depths I looked, longing to kindle in them the fire that I knew was burning in my own. She must have caught the flame, for with a sudden movement, she loosed my hands, and clasping both arms about my neck, for she was "tall and most divinely fair," looked steadily into my eyes for the space of a minute it seemed, before she answered:

"Teach me to love you? Ah, Anthony, you know little of love, else you could not have remained away from me, as you did,—after,—that day upon the cliffs,—when I first met you. You could not have remained away from me after that day at the Devil's Pulpit, even though I bade you.

"You could never have talked for Jack as you did that night, if you had really and truly loved me. By the same token that I *thought* that you loved me, you should have *known* that I loved you."

Oh, the rapture of that moment. Too great to last, for between me and the dear eyes raised to mine, came the image of Jack, sorrowful as he must be when he learns that he has lost his heart's desire, and the perfidy of the friend whom he had trusted.

She saw the shadow darken my eyes, and divined the cause.

"Jack knows," she whispered, laying her head lilywise upon my breast, in order that she might hide her eyes, while she made confession that she had told Jack of her love for me from the first, even though I had never asked for it. "Unmaidenly, was it not? But I loved him too well to let him eat out his heart with longing for that which I could never give. I knew he would not abandon hope until he knew the love he asked was not mine to give."

We came back to earth, and talked seriously of her going away for a while to regain her strength.

"And when you come back well and strong, you might marry me after all?"

"I might do worse," she answered in her old arch way, allowing me to explore at will, the lustrous eyes, in which now burned a fire of which no one had hitherto dreamed.

Hand in hand we strolled back toward the house, both moon and stars looking down approvingly.

It was settled between us that she would go away to some mountain resort, as I might be

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called any day to the East, to arrange some matters concerning my work, and then?

"It will be a whole year before the lilies bloom again, and you know I said a lily wedding or none at all."

"A whole year!" A sudden fear laid hold of my heart.

"Sweetheart, so much might happen in a year. I might die,—you might die. I dread waking to-morrow to find perhaps that this rapture is a thing of the past. 'Lisbeth, why not seize the present? It is the only way to be sure of the future."

She shook her head. "In love, dear, there is no uncertainty. Perfect love casteth out fear," and she glided from my encircling arms, and was soon lost to sight in the shadows of the lawn. She had eluded me; my "Maid of the Mist," as I had sometimes called her.

I then joined her father, guided by the light of his cigar, which glowed in the deep shadows cast by the vines upon the porch.

It requires a great deal of love and assurance to ask of a man his most priceless treasure, of which one knows that he is "not worthy."

How unworthy of this great boon, I was not myself fully aware until after summoning all my courage, I laid my suit before him, and all of my shortcomings were in return made known to me. My five and thirty years as compared to her eighteen summers; the great gulf of sectional prejudice which separated the people of the North from those of the South; our short acquaintance, I being a comparative stranger; her frailty of health, a heritage from her mother; in short, every argument that could be brought to bear against the consummation of my hopes.

He seemed greatly surprised at my revelation; not that I should love 'Lisbeth, that was but natural; but that 'Lisbeth should have permitted my suit. This was something upon which he had never seemed to calculate, that 'Lisbeth should ever marry; that he should ever be called upon to give her up.

"My dear sir, it is impossible!" he finally exclaimed, throwing out both hands, as if to ward me off, and rising, paced the porch back and forth to be rid of me. Then stopping before me, continued in manifest distress. "Mr. Conway, I find myself obliged to ask you to withdraw your suit for my daughter's hand."

"You do not seem, sir, to have taken into consideration your daughter's happiness. If she loves me, as she says she does——"

"Bah! Love? She is only a child, she knows nothing of love. Withdraw your suit; absent yourself from her presence, and it will not be many days before she recovers from this madness, if what you say be true. Believe me, she does not know her own mind."

Seeing before me the dear eyes that looked into mine in the garden, I felt that there was no mistake that she at least knew her own heart.

That my suit should not be dismissed in this cavalier fashion, I answered in a firm, courteous manner, controlling my voice as well as I could.

"This is a question for your daughter to decide. I cannot take my dismissal from any other lips. Neither can I withdraw my attentions, except at her request. If she loves me truly as she says and wishes to marry me, as she has promised, I cannot even at your bidding withdraw my claim."

"Sir, you should have come to me first,—as a gentleman,—and preferred your request; and the matter need have gone no fur-

ther. You should not have first stolen her heart."

How could I tell this father the exact state of the case? I could not choose but halt in my speech,—as I answered.

"I hope you will believe me, sir, when I tell you that from the first moment I saw your daughter, I loved her,—but without hope, until this evening, when my fears for her well-being betrayed me into a confession to her, which has brought me to you. But,—I must say to you that I love her so well, and so truly, that I am willing to accept her decision, even though it ruins my life. And I promise I will not see her again to bias her decision, without your consent."

He held out to me his hand. "Spoken like a gentleman, you are right. It is from her you must receive your answer. I will speak to her."

Bowing to me, and pressing my hand as he concluded, I understood that the interview was at an end and took my departure.

The next day I received from 'Lisbeth a tender, tear-stained note.

"It is all over for the present," she wrote.

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"Papa, for the first time in his life, is firm in his refusal to grant me the wish of my heart. Do not be downcast, dear, only be patient. I have never yet wanted anything I did not get, and when he sees me crying for this one thing, which I want more than anything ever before desired, he will let me have it. He was so surprised, I fear he was hardly courteous; but don't mind that. You see, you were the first lover that I had ever sent to him. That ought to satisfy you, and prove some recompense for a bad half hour. Do not be disheartened, sweetheart. You know about the course of true love? Do not come to say good-by, for I am so unstrung that I could not bear it. The scene with Papa, my disappointment, this weariness of body, all seem only to have intensified my love. By the time you receive this, I will have started as you yourself advised, to some quiet mountain resort, and when the lilies bloom again, I will be a bride,—

"Your own 'Lisbeth."

I was surprised, stunned. I am not ashamed to say I kissed over, and over again, the superscription, "Your own 'Lisbeth." I could scarcely believe it, that she was indeed

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gone, without another word, look, or hand-clasp.

Luckily for me, I found on my desk orders to return to Baltimore for some office work, and in a few hours I had packed up, and was setting my face eastward, every revolving wheel of the car taking me farther and farther away from the Elysian fields in which I had spent four happy months.

Her image was constantly before me, fresh, youthful and buoyant. I recalled the dainty gowns she wore,—even the scent of the lilies which she bore in her arms, heralding her coming that first day I saw her.

Then came to me a vision of her that night in the garden,—months and months ago it seemed, though it was only last night, when pale as the lilies, she drooped her head upon my breast to hide the flush which came into her cheek at the confession of her love.

Like a knife, a sense of keen pain-pleasure smote my heart again, as it did then, with the dread,—the terrible uncertainty of it all.

All night long I tossed in my berth, sleeping not at all,—but going over and over again, every stage in my journey of love, counting

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as white milestones all of the sweet words and looks vouchsafed me, which, after all, summed up very few, but sweet enough to live on for the rest of my life, be it long or short.

All night I lay, broad awake, looking up at the stars, until they began to fade out in the East, wondering just where they were shining upon her. I would know soon, for she would not fail to write.

By and by the dawn began to paint itself upon the sky, first in roseate hues; then flaming forth in gold, the sun came up, and another day had begun for me,—and 'Lisbeth, wherever she might be. I accepted it as a good omen.

When I reached the end of my journey I found upon my desk a little white-winged messenger from 'Lisbeth, mailed to me before leaving Lexington, in order that I might not be left in uncertainty as to her whereabouts. How thoughtful!

The storm with her father over, she seemed to have entirely gained her serenity, and so sure was she of the full fruition of her plans, that the gray fogs of doubt and uncertainty which had settled down upon me were lifted, and the sun burst through smiling, making the

whole world bright with his joy-giving presence. Splendid hopes filled my breast, and all my anxieties were forgotten, as with a brave heart I bent to my tasks.

Frequent letters cheered me, making milestones of each week of progress toward the end. Rest and the mountain air had accomplished wonders for her. From Bellevue she wrote:

"If you could only see me now, you would scarcely recognize the wraith, the mist maiden, as you called me that night when I slipped away from you in the garden. Papa is all devotion to me,—jealous, I really believe, of you and of all my other lovers, but don't be afraid, sweetheart."

She was so ingenuous, so confiding, that I looked forward to her confidences as I would have done to the unfolding of a flower, disclosing the golden heart within. She seemed perfectly confident of the future,—then why should not I? We were both so happy that I began wondering what I had done to deserve so precious a gift as her love. What would I have been without it?

XXVII

HOPE DEFERRED MAKETH THE HEART SICK

"The world grows lonely, and with many a tear,
I stretch out longing hands in vain to clasp
The treasures of my life and hold them here,
But all things dear seem slipping from my grasp."

ONE, two, three months had crawled away, and gone to join their fellows since 'Lisbeth had slipped from my arms that night in the garden. I had not laid eyes on her since, yet she was none the less fresh in my memory in all of her moods and phases.

I had hoped to be able to get off for Christmas to visit Bellevue, but no message of invitation had come from the Colonel as yet, and Christmas was almost here.

For a week past, the air had been full of frost, the east winds blowing straight from the coast, nipping and freezing. From the northwest came news of a blizzard bearing down upon the Mississippi Valley,—and later, sweeping over the Middle States, was locking everything close in its icy grasp. From our undertaking on the Kentucky River we had

learned that work had been suspended indefinitely, owing to the unprecedentedly cold weather, and the boys all coming home for Christmas.

For Christmas! All hope of sitting beside the Yule log at Bellevue had by this time disappeared. The Colonel was even more implacable, it seemed, than 'Lisbeth thought, and I was bound by my promise not to intrude myself upon them uninvited by him.

Then a whole week passed with no word from 'Lisbeth. I began to feel a little tightness about my heart. I began to grow restless, and apprehensive.

Finally a letter bearing the Kentucky postmark was handed me. If a knife had entered my breast it could scarcely have pained me more than the sight of the Colonel's handwriting upon the envelope, instead of 'Lisbeth's.

For some moments I held it in my hands unopened, wondering what could be the contents, as people will do in such moments of apprehension. Evidently the Colonel had proved more obdurate than 'Lisbeth had hoped, and we had been living in a fool's paradise these last few months.

"If I am to die, I will die with my boots on, as these Kentuckians would say," and betook myself leisurely, I thought, to the place appointed for the call.

"I at least have not rushed to see her," I said to myself, yet found myself almost running a race with time, to be first at the place appointed. Ah, the inconsistency of love.

The hour was at hand, for this first meeting since we plighted our troth,—to say instead of good-morrow, good-by; and I was on hand promptly, sending up my card.

"She will find me no laggard at least, in leave-taking, no matter what I may have been in love-making," I thought,—trying to make amends for my loss of self-respect, in rushing to see her the first moment she beckoned.

In a few minutes the Colonel was with me, a little embarrassed, and uneasy, remembering perhaps our parting. In view of those same circumstances, I was courteous, reserved, and dignified.

"'Lisbeth has not been well," he said, in rather an off-hand manner, leading the way to their apartments.

I could scarcely repress a smile. Had she not told me she always got what she cried for?

Now she had doubtless been pining for this trip to Europe; sighing for fresh worlds to conquer; the gay coquette!

"She has not been right well for several weeks. The weather has been frightfully cold, and our place is so exposed to the bitter winds, that it seemed impossible to keep the blizzard out, no matter how high we piled the fires. So I just made up my mind a trip somewhere would do her good, and Sayre, our old family doctor, you know, in Lexington, thought so too, so here we are."

He opened the door gently, as one does when not wishing to disturb an invalid.

Reclining on a low divan near the far-off window, was the dear familiar figure.

In spite of all my resolutions, I found myself quickening my steps to meet her. She seemed not to hear us, as we entered, for she did not turn her face until I was at her side.

"Not well!" her father had said. If he had said "she is dying," he would have come nearer the mark. How she had gone off in the few short months since I had seen her.

With her old-time languid grace she rose to greet me, and I saw that her gown, which used to fold so lovingly close her sweet body,

now sat loosely upon her once well-rounded figure. Her cool slim hand felt slimmer and feverish in my clasp. The pale cheek, over which came the pretty flush that had always greeted me, had lost some of its fullness.

I was profoundly shocked at first sight, but as I looked at her I grew somehow used to the change, my imagination, perhaps, filling in the familiar lines.

The eyes were the same sweet tender eyes that had looked so lovingly into mine, the long, fringed lids, as of yore, half-veiling their tenderness. I had never before seen such eyes, nor have I since seen their like. I wish that I had the skill of a painter, that I might preserve them for all time.

"I am so very glad to see you." Common-place words! It was she who spoke them, the first words that had passed between us since that night in the rose garden. I had not recovered from the shock of her altered appearance.

"I am sincerely glad you did not pass me by," was my rejoinder. How bald, and cold it sounded, and yet I believe that in that instant both of our hearts were almost broken in twain.

"'Lisbeth, dear," the Colonel said,—oh, how tenderly, "I will go now, and see about the baggage, and the trains, while you and Anthony talk,"—calling me by my name, for the first time since I first met him. I understood; no use to make war on me now. Continuing, he said:

"You will have to make the most of your time, for we have only a few hours here."

When he had gone, she turned to me with her old sweet smile.

"Come sit a little closer, you seem so far away."

I was on my knees beside her in a moment, both of her hands in mine, kissing them. I had meant to reproach her, for not having let me know; instead, dumbly I held out my arms to her, and leaning forward, she clasped hers about my neck as she did that night, and without my asking, kissed me of her own accord full upon my lips,—a loving, lingering, tender kiss. Then withdrawing herself from my fond embrace, she whispered: "You are surprised, sweetheart, but, you know, I came to say good-by to you."

"Good-by?" I repeated after her, not seeming to grasp the meaning.

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"Yes,—this must be our leave-taking; before Papa comes back."

"Where are you going?"

"I don't know, dear, but wherever it is, I know I am going away from love and happiness."

"Lisbeth, my darling. What do you mean?" I asked, rising and taking the place she made beside her.

"You know, dear, what I told you that night in the garden,—about my mother?" lifting her glowing eyes to mine. A sudden fear, born of their brightness, assailed me.

"Dear one," taking her hands in mine, "you must not indulge such fancies; they are absurd!"

"And yet your hand trembles; and your looks belie your words. Don't look so woe-begone, sweetheart, for after all, it may be only because I have been crying a little for what I wanted. I really think Sayre told Papa so, and like the dear good Papa that he has always been, he has consented that I should have the sweets which he thought he was withholding for my good. We stopped here, that he might tell you so himself, and,—if,—if I am going on that long journey,—to Europe,—you

know," she added hastily, "I wanted to tell you good-by."

"Then we will not say good-by. It is an ugly word. I hate it. It shall be '*Au revoir*.' Do you know, dear, when your father spoke of Europe in his letter, I thought he wanted to put the sea between us, and I was very angry."

"See how hasty you were; we may not go abroad at all. That was only a fancy of Sayre's, to divert me. We are first going to New York to consult a specialist, whom he recommends highly, and we will be guided by him. If this is the nervous prostration, prophesied by you; or if,—mind you, I say if,—I have only been grieving for you," with an old-time radiant smile, "why then all will be well."

"I am confident this is the solution of the whole matter," possessing myself of both her hands, and pressing them to my lips. "Upon my soul, you are better already, and if the improvement goes on at this rate, why the sooner you put your case in my hands the better."

"Say to-morrow?"

"Why not to-day? You see Sayre was only recommending a homeopathic remedy; a

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crossing of the ocean to cure a crossing in love; catch the idea? If you are not crossed in love, then why cross the ocean, see? There is really no reason why we may not be married at once. Is there, my darling?"

"Yes, sweetheart. You forget that I said mine must be a lily wedding, or none at all. By that time I may be stronger. We will wait until they are abloom,—until then——"

"Until then?"

"We will possess our souls in patience, which will not be so hard now that I know for a very fact that you will be all my own. June is not so very far away."

"Six months!" Who could say if we were so rich in months. We might not have one.

Just then the Colonel came into the room, and we all rose to go out to dinner. Laying her arms about my neck, she asked, her face lighted by a love-born smile:

"Nobody can take him away from me now, Papa, can they?"

The Colonel's eyes filled with tears as he answered: "Nobody in this world, my precious daughter." Through his tears I read the tender solicitude which prompted this unreserved surrender.

The wine served with the dinner proved to 'Lisbeth a stimulant so efficacious that we parted in far better spirits than we could possibly have hoped for.

The great New York specialist sent them to Florida; to some quiet resort, where she could live out of doors, and with a mind perfectly at rest, recover her lost strength, and ward off the threatened danger.

The Colonel was jubilant over the result, and wrote, begging me to "run down every few weeks." 'Lisbeth's letters were full of cheer. I shuddered when I thought of the weight of sadness which had so burdened her loving heart, unconfessed, while she had thought her young life hung in the balance.

I did run down for a few days' vacation in February. How well she looked; quite her old self again. The Colonel was beaming with happiness, and all of our old scores were forgotten.

"It was all a mistake," he said to me one day. "Old heads can't plan for young hearts. You and 'Lisbeth arrange to suit yourselves. Only one thing I ask. Plan to settle at the old homestead. 'Lisbeth is all that I have."

"Everything shall be as 'Lisbeth wills. We

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have both learned that she can't be crossed, you know." I answered,—smiling.

"Yes, yes, I'm afraid I have spoiled her."

Why dwell upon the happy meetings that followed? I was glad that 'Lisbeth had not heeded my protests that summer night against a year's delay, since it would have robbed us of much of the love-making.

XXVIII

A SECRET—M'CLUSKEY

AFTER only five short days with 'Lisbeth in Florida, I returned to Kentucky, for there was much to be done before March, the contract time for the completion of the bridge.

I bore an anxious heart within my breast, despite the physician's assurance that all would be well with her. Hard work helped me bear her absence, and the excitement attending the satisfactory completion of the stupendous work buoyed me up until all was over, and I had returned to the East, to await their coming.

'Lisbeth's letters were full of cheer, and those from the Colonel very encouraging, assuring me of her rapid advance toward complete recovery. They left Florida early in April, lingering until the last moment in the land of sunshine and palms, then traveled by easy stages northward.

They did not care to reach home before May, and on the first day of that month they

found me awaiting them at the Phoenix Hotel in Lexington, where we had first met, about one year before. Together we made the journey over the cliffs with McCluskey on top of the stage as before. How supremely happy we were: too happy to keep it to ourselves.

"I am going to tell McCluskey," I whispered to 'Lisbeth. "He may think it strange, you know." My arm was about her waist.

"He's such an *old* friend, I'm going to tell him myself," answered 'Lisbeth. And in order to forestall me, began at once.

"Mr. McCluskey. I—I've—I've got a *great* secret to tell you; the *greatest* secret you ever heard. I—I'm——"

"Not so much of a secret, I reckon, as *you* think," interrupted McCluskey, looking neither to the right nor the left.

"Why—Mr. McCluskey. How *did you know?*" queried 'Lisbeth.

"Know what?" queried McCluskey.

"Why,—why that I—that we are going to be married!" a pretty blush dyeing her cheek.

"Pshaw!" ejaculated McCluskey, in a manner very unconcerned. "Why, I reckon I know'd it afore you did. I know'd that day when you fell over in his arms down thar on

the cliff, jest what was a comin',—that you'd marry him,—jest as shore as thar wuz a sun in the heavens."

"Why,—Mr. McCluskey!"

"Truth!—An' when I see dis heyer chap,—what is a gen'l'man ef ever d' wuz one,—" said McCluskey, with emphasis, duly mindful of Oil in the Can, and the five hundred dollars,—“When I see this gen'leman a puttin' of that pink parasol in his heart pocket,—the left one, you know, I knowed thar wuz no manner o' doubt about it. He was a gwinter marry you,—ef he could git you,—mind; as shore as two and two makes fo'. Whether he could git you, was the only pint; the signs panted that way, mighty strong. I see a heap more on top o' this stage than folks calcerlate on."

"Love-making?" I asked.

"'Course! You see thar's somethin' in the aar, 'bout here; an' the cliff's looks so solemn, an' lonesome like that I reckon it kinder makes people,—'specially young people—feel like they wanten to git closer together; kinder skeer theirselves like children in the dark."

Of course I took advantage of this to draw 'Lisbeth within my clasp.

“An’ look at all these flowers a-bloomin’.
An’ lissen at the birds jus’ home again; singin’
so you can hardly hear yo’self think! I declar’
—spring’s a mighty dangerous time for young
people on the cliffs, for ef they do fall in love,
—the jig’s all up;—they’s just like a duck
after a June bug,—they don’t see nothin’ else,
nor stop fur ennything,—less they break their
neck ’gin the paling of the fence, when the
pirty bug gets through on the other side.
Could’a told the Kernel that when he wuz a
carryin’ Mis’ ’Lisbeth off to Floridy;—jus’
spendin’ his money fur nothin’.”

’Lisbeth laughed merrily at this, while I
answered, “I thought so too. I told ’Lisbeth
in Baltimore they had better put her case in
my hands.”

“As for you:”—began McCluskey. “Don’t
you remember that day goin’ over to Lexin’-
ton? You didn’t have narry a idear of goin’
to the races, tell I happened to let slip,—ac-
cidentally,—on purpose, of course, ’cause I’d
done made up my mind I wanted you ter bet
my money—I let slip that the Kernel an’ Mis’
’Lisbeth would be thar. I wuz a-lookin’ at yer
out o’ the corner of my eye, an’ I knowed I
might hand you that five dollars; an’ sho’ ’nuff

you took it without battin' your'eye, or even sayin' one work 'bout changin' your mind. I saw it change all right."

"Your profession, I see, has made you a keen observer of human nature."

"You bet it has," beginning to rein in his horses.

We were now drawing near the toll-gate, and the keeper beamed on us as we passed through, calling after us a fervent "Sure and God bless yer," while Mikey gazed at us from behind the corner of the house as if we were angel visitants.

"It all seems so strange," whispered 'Lisbeth, drawing closer to me, and smiling up into my face with utter abandonment to happiness, as we wound our way down the cliff road, which had proven the beginning of our life's romance, or rather, hers,—since mine had begun at the first sight of this Kentucky belle.

"Here's right whar it all happened," said McCluskey, when he reached the exact spot, where the stage had come so near upsetting.

"Drive carefully, McCluskey," I could not help saying, and received a contemptuous look for my pains.

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"Look at the beautiful flowers growing right on the very spot. Can't I have them, Mr. McCluskey?" begged 'Lisbeth.

"Not this trip. You see we'r goin' down grade,—but when we come back this way,—on your weddin' trip, you can stop an' gether as many as you want. You see you'll be goin' uphill then."

"Pray God that we may," I answered reverently.

"Amen!" responded McCluskey.

On the other side of the river the carriage awaited us, and we were soon deposited at Bellevue, where it had been arranged that I should spend some time before returning to the East.

XXIX

UNCLE EPH

THE following morning found me up bright and early, out in the porch, waiting for 'Lisbeth, and watching the mists lift themselves above the trees, clearly defining the course of the river. I was startled from a pleasing reverie, born of springtime and love, by a familiar salutation.

“Good-mawnin', Marsa.”

It was Uncle Ephraim, passing by with his rake upon his shoulder, and his pipe in his mouth. I had made his acquaintance over in Harrodstown, where he sometimes spent a week or so, doing odd jobs,—for he belonged to nobody in particular; that is to say,—he had no antebellum ties. He rather affected, “*the quality*” in choosing his present employers. I was not surprised therefore to find him at Bellevue.

He had somehow migrated to Kentucky a good many years before, from Virginia, a change which he had never ceased to regret, since there was nothing to be found here, ac-

ording to his notion, quite equal to "Ole Firginny."

"How's your health, Uncle Eph?" I asked, by way of renewing the acquaintance.

"Poly,—poly, Marsa; it 'pears like I jist can't get useter Kintucky, an' dese heyer fogs on de river. I kinder got de rhumatiz dis heyer mawnin', but I 'lows I mus' git out ennyhow an' rake de leaves offen Miss 'Lisbeth's fern bed 'fore she gits out to see 'bout it," moving off around the house.

Having made acquaintance with him and quite a little progress towards friendship by means of sundry quarters and plugs of tobacco while he was working over about Harrodstown, I suddenly conceived the idea of trying to draw the old man out, concerning his emigration to Kentucky, something which no mortal man or woman had ever been able to do. To all their questioning they were able to draw from him nothing more than the intimation of his great superiority over all others, contained in the simple fact, as often stated by him:

"*W'y—I cum frum Ole Firginny!*"

In pursuance of this intention I followed him around the house.



“I kinder got de rhumatiz dis heyer mawnin’”



"Fern bed?" I asked, stepping down to follow him.

"Yas, sur. Dey looks to me jest like any udder weeds an' wile things, but she sets a heap o' sto' by 'em. She brung 'em herself from down thar on the river, 'bout de Devil's Pulpit, I b'lieve she say, an' she was mighty keerful 'bout settin' 'em out an' makin' me water 'em an' fool wid 'em, an' kiver 'em up wid dry leaves in de fall. Some co'tin' beau mus' a give 'em to her," eyeing me suspiciously.

" 'Laws sakes,' sez I, 'Miss 'Lisbeth, in Ole Firginny, dese heyer tings grow wile 'bout de mountings; what fur you makin' yo'self so much trouble 'bout 'em. Spoze day does die. You kin git plenty more right down thar 'bout Cogar's Landin'.' "

" 'I don' keer,' she says, 'dese heyer's de ones I want. An' you's always talkin' 'bout Ole Firginny anyhow. What fur didn't you stay thar?' "

All this time he was raking off the leaves through which the ferns were springing fresh and green. I knew why she wanted them, and accepted their thrift as a good omen, for they had survived the icy breath of winter.

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"If you think so much of Virginia, why did you leave it, Eph?" I asked, willing to prolong the conversation, for it was still early.

"Well you see, hit was jest dis heyer way," stopping work, and leaning upon his rake. "Dis wuz how kum it so.

"Long befo' de niggahs wuz set free in Ole Firginny, my mammy and my daddy wuz tired livin' in de country so fur apart, so dey hired deir time from deir Marsters, an' jes' wen' into de town to live, an' carry me erlong. I reckon dey did'n' fin' de wuk no more easy, but dey lib togedder mor' comfor'ble like, caze she b'long'd to de Lewises, an' my daddy, he b'long to der Edwardses, and dey lib fur apart, tree or fo' miles mebbie.

"My mammy wuz a mity proud niggah, 'cause de Lewises,—dese here same Lewises, who you fin all 'round 'bout here,—wuz mity fine folks; de best dey is; an' de Edwardses jest de same, and my daddy bein' a Edwards' nigger, wuz mity proud uv his white folks,—like most niggers is,—an',—sometimes my mammy an' my daddy, when dey was quar'lin', flung it up to one anudder, my mammy sayin', 'You ain't nothin' but a low down triffin' Ed'ards' nigger, what de debbil'l come an' git

some day to wait on yo' Mistiss; an' it'll sarve you right.' I notis dis always made my daddy madder dan ennyting she could say.

"Well, one day when I wuz settin' 'round de sto', a Ole Firginny gen'l'man, de rale ting, wid fine black cloes on, an' a stovepipe hat, an' a long white beard, an' a gol'head cane, come a ridin' 'long in his buggy.

" 'C'larter gracious if dar ain't Maj'r Ed'ards,' said de sto'-keeper, runnin' to de do' to look at him. 'I ain't seen him afore since de debill took his wife away.'

" 'De debill took his wife away,' sez I. 'Why, how cum dat?'

" 'I dunno, no more 'bout it'n dat. I jest always heerd it.'

"When I went home, I axes my mammy 'bout it.

" 'S-sh, chile,' sez she. 'Don' let yer daddy know you eber axes sich a question, he kill yer,—he will.'

" 'But *did* de debill tak' Marser Edwards' wife away?'

"She wen' to de do, an' look out, 'n den she look out'n de back winder, and den she say ter me, 'Yes, he *did*! Now yer got it.'

" 'How did he?' I axes, all a trimble, 'cause

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she wuz allus a tellin' me der debill'd git me sum day.

" 'Nebber you min' 'bout dat, he *done* it. Ebberbody knows dat. Now don' yer tell yer daddy you knows it, 'cause he's dat proud uv de Ed'ardses, he'd *kill* yer.'

" 'How did he do it?' I kep on axin', tell she picked up a stick of wood an' tole me 'cl'ar out,' an' I did.

" Den I kep on studyin' an' studyin' 'bout it, tell one mawnin' I walk out to Marser Ed'ards, 'cause I wuz *boun'* to fine out.

" Thar he wuz a sittin' on his front porch, as fine a man as you would wan' ter see; a rale ole restycat. I look at him throo de fence fust, den troo de trees; sidling up to de po'ch, fust behin' one tree,—den behin' annudder, 'fered all de time, de debill'd catch me frum behind; and den, wonc't when he wuzn't lookin' I sidled up right quick, an' set down on de big stone steps an' wuz a lookin' at him when he fust seen me.

" He was s'prized like; an' he say right quick, 'Ain't you Eph's boy?'

" An' I say, 'Yassur.'

" 'Well, what yer wan't?' sez he ter me, sez he.

" 'I don' want nuthin',' sez I ter him, sez I, unconsarned like, an' I wuz jes'r a wonderin' how I wuz gwinter ax him ef de debill did take his wife away, an' *how* he done it.

" 'Den whut yer cum heyer fur?' sez he, an' I swallered, an' swallered, an' den say:

" 'Nuthin'.

" Well, dat's 'bout all yer gut, I reckon,' sez he.

" 'I jes' thought,—I'd—I'd cum here ter—ter see,' den he look at me so straight I couldn' say it, so jest tole a lie, an' say, 'ter see yer.'

" 'Ter see me? Well, den, here's a apple fur yer, an' he retch down in his pocket an' give me a great big red apple, an' I went an' sot down on de steps, an' eat, an' eat, an' eat on de apple, a wonderin' all de time how I wuz a goin' ter fine out if de debill shore *did* take his wife away an' how he *don* it,—ef he did.

" I dun eat de apple, an' trow de cor' away, an' still I couldn' ax.

" Den he say ter me, sez he, 'Now you dun see me, 'spoze you goes back to de kitchen an' fotch me a cole to light my pipe,' an' I run 'round de house to de kitchen an' got de coles, in a shovel, an' I hands it to him, an' I say to him right quick:

“ ‘ Marse Ed’ards, did de debill take your wife away? ’

“ An’ he didn’ say nothin’, but look at me, an’ look at me tell I trimble all ober, den he say:

“ ‘ Yes,—he did! ’ So mad like, dot I drop de shovel, full of fire, an’ run, an’ run, pirty nigh all de way back to town, an’ I kep a studyin’, an’ a studyin’. I nebber did ax him *how* he done it, and dat was pintedly what I wanted to know mos’.

“ When I got home, I set an’ studied ’bout hit, ’till my mammy say:

“ ‘ Nigger, what de matter wid you enny-how? Is yer sick? ’

“ An’ I say, ‘ No, Mammy, I ain’t sick, but I do kno’ *fur sho*’ dat de debill did take *Marser* Ed’ards’ wife away.’

“ ‘ How does you know? ’ sez she ter me, sez she.

“ ‘ ‘Cause he tole me so hisself,’ an’ den I tole her all ’bout it.

“ ‘ Good lan’ sakes! Lissen at de nigger. Now I *know* yer daddy’ll kill yer.’

“ ‘ But I was too skeered to ax him how he dun it, an’ I’m ’bleeged ter know,’ says I.

“ ‘ I never hear de like fur curiosity. Now,

I'll tell yer, an' ef yer ever say ennything 'bout it to yer daddy, ef *he* don' kill yer, *I will.*'

" 'One day, when Marser Ed'ards was goin' 'way frum home, his wife dress herself in all her fine cloes,—an' she had de bes', fur Marser Ed'ards wuz dot proud uv her,—an' she looked pirtier dan enny picter ebber you saw.

" 'Arter Marser Ed'ards bin gone 'bout a hour, a great big chariot jest a shinin' tell it made yer eyes ache ter look at it,—drawed by two big black horses, a prancin' along, a snortin' fire an' brimstone, turn in at Marser Ed'ardses gate; yo' daddy seen it hisself, an' he kin tell yer so ef he will.

" 'Well, when he druv up to de do', Miss Ed'ards mus' a bin lookin' out uv de winder, fur she wuz jest drawed, an' drawed down de stars, an' out on de po'ch by sum kind uv speerit, fur nobody went to fetch her.

" 'When she got to de big stone steps she foun' thar de debill, hisself, lookin' fur all de worle like a fine man, in a black cote wid great long tails, forked in de middle at de back, an' he had a fine black silk hat, what he hel' befo' his face, so ennybody could'nt see what he look like.

" 'When she got close beside him he took

her han' an' kiss it, an' hoped her in de kerrige an' slam de do, an' draw down de blin's, an' de horses wen' prancin', lickety split up de rode in a cloud uv brimstone what look just like fine yaller dus', an' dat's de las' what ennybody eber seed uv Marster Ed'ards' wife, what de debill tuk away.'

"Well, Mammy went out to see one uv de neighbors to tell her 'bout it, I reckon, an' when daddy cum home, I was a settin' thar, still a studyin'. He axed me whut wuz de matter; ef I was sick?

"An' I jest couldn' stan' it no longer, so I sez to him, sez I, 'Daddy, did you see de debill when he took Marser Ed'ards' wife away?'

"He jest look at me a minit, den he say: 'Who tole you dat?' an' he jest wouldn' res' tell I tole him all I knowed, an' 'bout goin' to Marse Ed'ardses house.

"Well, sur, he lit into me, an' I reckon no nigger ebber did git sich a beaten as he beat me. Den he wen' after mammy. I don' know what he say to her,—an' while he wuz gone, I crawl inter bed an' arter while I wen' ter sleep. I don' know how long I slep, but de fust ting I know my mammy was dar, a hangin' ober me, an' I clar'ter gracious she foun' ebry spot

what my daddy had miss. An' she wuz strong, she wuz, 'cause she was use ter washin'.

" 'I'se glad,—I is, yer ain't but half a Lewis nigger, I couldn' spec no mo' frum a Ed'ards.'

" Well, soon as I heard 'em a snorin', I crep out, an' I started, I didn't know whar,—an' I wuz feered de debill would ketch me at ever step; an' I walked an' I walked all night, an' de naix day, an' de naix day, axin' eberybody I met whar I wuz, an' I wuz still in Ole Fir-ginny.

" An' I kep on, an' I kep on, stoppin' sometimes to work; jest a workin' my way to Kentucky, I thought I'd fine Marser Dan'l Boone, an' wurk for him. I wuz more'n a ye'r gittin' heyer, an' I fine Dan'l Boon ded fifty year or more, but I staid on, an' jest kept a workin' fur ennybody. I reckon I wuz a runaway nigger, but I didn' know it, fur sho', an' I wuz-zent gwineter tell ennybody, nor ax enny questions, 'cause I wuz always skeered fur fear Marser Ed'ards or Marser Lewis mout hear 'bout me, an' ketch me, fur by rights, I b'longed to Marser Lewis, my mammie bein' a Lewis nigger.

" Den of cos when de wah cum it set me free long uv de res'; but I would a liked to hear

what 'cum o' Marser Ed'ards, an' his wife, what de debill tuk away.

"So you see, Marser, dat's how cum it so dat I wouldn' tell dese heyer niggahs nuffin', 'ceptin' I jes' cum frum Ole Firginny. It made 'em natchelly 'speck me mo' long as dey b'lieved I wuz a free nigger 'fore de wah; an' I natchelly 'specks a gen'leman like you, frum 'bout Ole Firginny, to 'spect my confidents," eyeing me sharply.

Of course I assured him of my fidelity to the trust reposed in me, as a Virginia gentleman, and since so many years have elapsed since he joined Marser Ed'ards, and Marser Lewis, perhaps, in the great unknown, I hope this will not be considered a betrayal of his confidence.

Knocking his pipe on the head of his rake, he resumed: "I would like to hear 'bout Marse Ed'ards an' his wife."

"Maybe you will go back some day to find out." He shook his head sorrowfully.

"I reckon not, Massa. Hit seems to me like I don' keer to go back no mo'. Dey tells me dat Ole Firginny ain't de same place hit wuz in dem days. Dey say dat in de war dey fit,—and dey fit, all ober it, till de ribbers fairly run

wid blood, an' de Wilderness whar dey did de mos' of de fightin' was jes' pile up wid dead soljers; de rebels, an' de Yanks, piled toged-der, so you couldn' tell 'em tother frum which, 'ceptin' fur de cloes, what didn't mount to much on de po' rebs. I shorely wuz sorry to hear 'bout it, fur dey wuz mighty nice people, an' had mighty gran' doin's in dair day. If I'd a bin dar, I reckon I'd bin long Marse Ed'ards, 'cause he wuz my people.

"I did 'low to myself as I wuz runnin' 'way frum Firginny, ef I live to be a growd man, I'd go back an' drive fur Marser Ed'ards, 'caus' by rights I b'longed to him, but Marser Ed'ards mus' be ded an' gone, long 'go, an' dey do say dey ain't no mo' drivin' in dey coaches in Ole Firginny.

"I 'spec de hosses dun kill in de war; an' my daddy an' mammy,—dey's dun ded an' gone long 'go; ef dey ain't, dey's done furgut all 'bout me, I 'specs."

With this Eph took up his rake and his work on the fern bed.

"Yas, sur, Miss 'Lisbeth wanted 'em kivered up, an' even do dey wuz wile things an' growed plentiful down thar in de cliffs, sez I to myself, sez I, 'how does I know but what

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de good Lawd, what counts de hars uv our haid, and feed de sparrow, kivers 'em up a little heavier wid de dry leaves, when He knows hits a gwinter be a rale cole winter.

"Co's *He* must a know'd hit wuzn't gwinter be a warm winter, fur I know'd myself hit wuz gwinter be a mos' pow'ful cole winter, so you see, Massa, I kiver 'em up pirty heavy,—an' flung on a little manure to keep 'em warm an' good,—an' please Miss 'Lisbeth.

"I dunno which one uv her beaux gut dese heyer ferns fur her, but he wuz a cotin' one, you may be boun'," eyeing me inquiringly. "An' she's got a heap o' that kin'."

"How did you know it was going to be cold?"

"By de signs, Massa. De signs all pinted dat way. The fust thing I noticed wuz how de corn wuz kivered up. I nebber did see de silk so heavy, an' de shucks so thick an' plentiful, 'round de yers, as dey wuz las' fall.

"An' den I nebber did see de squir'ls as busy as dey wuz a huntin' up de hickr'y nuts, an' de wo'nuts, and sich, an' a berryin' dem in de groun'. Co's I know'd frum dat, dey had de idee hit wuz a gwinter be cole.

"An' de possums an' de coons, dey wuz kep

so busy a huntin' an' a packin', an' a berryin' all kin's uv nuts, dat dey was po' when winter cum on. Why, I cotch a coon down thar 'bout Cogar's, an' I stretched de skin so as my wife could make me a cap outen it, an' a mighty good cap it was, too."

"What did the hard winter have to do with his skin?"

"Oh, Laws, Massa, din' you know a fat coon's skin ain't no 'count? De fur ain't so thick, 'cause its gwinter be a warm winter an' he keeps on eatin', 'stead uv savin' up for cole weather, an' gits fat," with fine contempt of my lack of knowledge of wood lore.

"An' den I notis when I want to go fishin', I jes' couldn' fine enny bait. De wurms jis' natchelly had tuk to de groun' an' crawled inter de holes so fur dat I b'lieve dey jis' drawed deir holes in after um. I couldn' fine 'em.

"An' den anudder ting I tuk notis uv. I nebber did see as many wile ducks an' geese as wuz a flyin' las' fall. I kill one down thar 'bout de fork uv Dix ribber, an' hit wuz a rite young goose,—las' spring's;—jist as tender, and mighty fine eatin', my Rachel, she parbile it, an' fix it up like a young goose oughter be fixed, good corn bread stuffin', an' brown in de

oven wid good rich gravy,—an', sur,—we pick de bones clean."

I must confess that this appetizing description of the goose had its effect upon me, and I was not surprised when he stopped for a moment to draw his shirt sleeve across his mouth.

"An' I sez to Rachel, sez I, 'Rachel, now we'll kno' fur sho' ef hits gwinter be a cole winter or no. Cose de goose bone ain't like dese heyer wedder men;—hit natchelly can't lie 'bout it.'

"An' me an' Rachel, we take dat goose bone (hit had to be a goose, a gander wouldn't a bin no manner o' 'count), we tuk dat bres' bone, we did, o' de young goose,—last spring's goose, out or doors,—an' we hel' hit up, twixt us an' de sun what wuz a shinin' uv hits brightes', 'bout twelve o'clock; fust me, an' den Rachel, an' we couldn't see no light 'tall thru hit:—jest a black cloud like frum top to bottom.

"We looked at one anudder, me at Rachel, an' Rachel at me. I wuz de fust to say a word, says I to Rachel, sez I:

"'Rachel,' says I, 'de ole man'l have ter hump hissself now a gittin' in de wood fur win-

ter, 'cause hits gwinter be a mighty cole winter.'

"An', Massa, I ain't tellin' you no lie, when I say I started in dat berry day to pick up any loose rails I foun' layin' 'roun' de fences, an' splitted 'em up as fas' as I brung 'em in, an' by de time cole wedder set in, I had a good pile of wood laid by fur de winter, an' while de udder idle, shif'less niggahs what couldn' read de signs, an' would'n' b'lieve me, wuz scrooched up over a few little chips, what they gether here an' thar, ebr'y day, my ole woman an' me was a settin' by a good warm fire.

"An' dat's how cum it so, when Miss 'Lisbeth she say to me, says she:

"'Uncle Eph,'—she jes' call me dat, 'cause she know me eber since she wuz a little gal, 'Uncle Eph,' sez she: 'I want yer to kiver up my fern bed mighty good, kaze I wouldn' have it die fur no 'mount uv money.'—I jes' say to myself, sez I:

"'All right, honey. Hit is gwinter be cole sho' nuf,' an' I kivered 'em up deep, an' I flung in a little manure to keep 'em warm, an' you see fur yo'self how peart they is."

By this time, 'Lisbeth was on the porch.

"I hear Miss 'Lizbeth," said Eph. "Go

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'long to her. You needn't be 'fraid de debill gwinter take her 'way from you, 'cause we all dun see nobody can't take her 'way. Go long, chillen; enjoy yo'self 'cause you ain't gwinter be young but oncet."

XXX

A LILY WEDDING

'LISBETH joined me at the foot of the steps, giving me both of her hands, lifting to mine her chaste sweet eyes, in which there burned a flame pure enough to be laid on Athor's altar. Without asking, I bent my head ever so little, and laid my lips on hers, the first time since that day before she went to Florida, when she told me, and we both felt, that we were bidding good-by forever, perhaps, to love and happiness, and she, alas, to even life itself. How changed was everything. Standing in the morning sunlight, entirely rested from the fatigue of travel, the soft flush called to her cheek by my caress still lingering, she looked more beautiful than I had ever seen her.

Spring had been late in coming, after the long, icy winter, and seemed now to be making up for lost time. The flowers were all a-bloom, the wild roses stretching out fra-

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grant arms to detain us as we passed through the sweet-scented bower leading to the garden, where flowers of every hue were blooming. Here and there were pretty patches of color, pink and white, where bleeding-hearts drooped from the stem. Cornflowers, blue as the summer sky above; old-fashioned pinks filling the air with their spicy fragrance; great patches of yellow jonquils and buttercups were disputing possession with the columbine.

“Oh columbine! open your folded wrapper
Where two twin turtle doves dwell,”

said 'Lisbeth, gathering a sprig to show me the turtle doves within.

Hand in hand we passed through the borders, and the spirit of the springtime strolled with us, turning our hearts to thoughts of love, and our converse to such sweet nonsense as serves to beguile the time of lovers; or talking not at all, for even silence was sweeter than the honey in the hearts of the flowers so tempting to the bees.

We were looking for the lily beds. At last we came to the bulbs sprouting up bravely from the brown earth, which had held them

prisoners for so long. I was disappointed, for as yet there was not a single bud betokening the coming flower.

Looking at them ruefully, I pressed the little fingers resting so quietly in my hand. Smiling brightly into my downcast face, 'Lisbeth gravely assured me that Mother Nature was no laggard. No matter how far behind she might seem in her kindly office of clothing the bare earth, she managed to hurry up and always brought forth bud and flower on time, as well as fruit in due season.

"Then, when will it be, sweetheart?" I asked.

"When the lilies are a-bloom," she answered again, as she did that night.

Slowly, very slowly, we walked back through the scented borders to the house, where breakfast awaited us, us two alone; for the Colonel had already breakfasted and gone. For us two alone, a cozy little table had been laid, and 'Lisbeth's cheek, as clear and fine as a white rose, blushed pink at the thought of the sweet intimacy suggested by this arrangement. A fern dish in the center served as a screen, but by moving my plate stealthily a little to one side, I had the benefit of every

change of expression, and her face was an open book which I lingered long to read.

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After the first day, I found 'Lisbeth had much to occupy her time; sundry trips to Lexington, now only a half hour distant,—thanks to the bridge if she chose to take the cars. In her absence on such trips, I found much pleasure in the renewing of old friendships made at Harrodstown. Of course I spent a day at Hayfields, and broke to the Major the news of my approaching marriage, receiving his hearty congratulations.

Just then he left me for a moment to speak to Henry, who was engaged with his morning work inside the house.

"You see, Major, this little matter was all fixed up after I saw you," I explained, by way of apology for withholding my confidence.

"I understand. Like a wise man in such affairs, you kept your own counsel, while you sat here, turning me inside out. I congratulate you, not only for having won the belle of the blue grass for your bride, but also on your ability to keep a secret."

"Thank you," I answered, with a warm pressure of his extended hand.

"Henry!" called the Major. At a beck Henry appeared in the doorway, bearing on a salver, a decanter with glasses, and water, and sugar, and mint, out of which the Major concocted the delicious beverage of which I have spoken before.

"Now here's the *f-i-n-e-s-t* mint julep you ever saw, made of twenty-year-old whisky, which I keep for special occasions."

"No key in it?" I asked.

"No key in it. We are going to drink to the health and happiness of the bride, which is your own, also." This we proceeded at once to do. Setting down my glass, I said to the Major:

"I am sorry to have missed seeing your wife."

"'Miss Maria' will be sorry to have missed you. She is kept pretty busy these days looking after these poor people, who do not seem to be able to look after themselves."

Bidding the Major good-by, I had soon turned my back upon Hayfields, carrying with me many pleasing memories of the hospitable old homestead.

So passed the days, laggingly sometimes, but every evening found me at 'Lisbeth's side,

watching the sun go down in his golden glory, and the silver moon climb higher and higher, through the fogs, from the river into the starry sky. On the seventh evening, we sat silent and happy, for we were trying to fathom the length and the breadth and the depth of the great bliss that had come to us, for one is not apt to talk much when so blessed.

I was going away on the morrow for a trip East, of a fortnight's duration, perhaps, and the thought of parting, even for so short a time, no doubt oppressed us both, for we sat speechless until the time came for me to leave. The heavy mists of that region were enveloping us, and feeling that she should be indoors, I folded her in my arms to bid her good-by, I hoped, for the last time.

"Sweetheart, our last parting was bad enough; somehow this seems to me worse. Pray God we may never have another."

I felt her shiver a little in my arms, and in the filmy muslin robe which enfolded her warm sweet body, I felt the dampness from the fog which had moistened her silky hair that lay cool against my cheek. Claspings her still closer, I kissed her, whispering:

"God bless you, my darling," then with sud-

den impulse, I kissed brow, cheek and lips, saying:

"God bless my treasures, and give them to my longing sight again."

She was still watching me, as I rode away in the checkered moonlight. Turning, I found the mists had already hidden her, but I called back to her:

"Remember, love, when the lilies bloom." Clear and sweet her voice floated out to me:

"I will remember. Adieu."

P. S.—We had a lily wedding after all, and in her satiny robes of bridal white, garlanded with the lilies that she loved, she was the fairest of them all, this Kentucky belle. It was a very quiet affair, for 'Lisbeth wished it so. Of all her lovers, only Jack was there, and he was my best man.

"The Major and Miss M'riar" were there, for they were her cousins, and my best friends.

Phil left school for a day and came over from Cogar's, to see the little romance of the "Bridge Builder" satisfactorily ended. "If the Drummer could only have been here!" he exclaimed. "He was down at Cogar's last week and asked about you."

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“ Alive still? ” I asked. “ He must bear a charmed life,” remembering his numerous hairbreadth escapes on the road.

This narrative would scarcely be complete if I did not say that McCluskey took us on the first stage of our bridal journey over the cliffs, and with him was the Drummer.

THE END

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